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NEBRASKA HERITAGE SERIES

Louis A. Holmes



T the request of the publisher, Louis A. Holmes had agreed to autograph the numbered copies of this edition of FORT MCPHERSON, NEBRASKA (*Fort Cottonwood N.T.*). His sudden death on the eve of publication made this impossible. As a tribute to his memory and as a means of carrying this work to completion in accordance with his plans, members of his family have provided the publisher with signatures from Mr. Holmes' papers. One of these is attached to this volume.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. M. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

JOHNSEN PUBLISHING COMPANY

*"The West was won by war and strife,
A constant struggle when the land was new,
Hardship and boredom was a soldier's life,
And the victory only to a valiant few."*

THIS IS NUMBER **456**

OF THE LIMITED, SIGNED EDITION

Louis R. Holmes



FORT McPHERSON, NEBRASKA

FORT COTTONWOOD, N. T.

Guardian of the Tracks and Trails

By LOUIS A. HOLMES

JOHNSEN PUBLISHING COMPANY
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

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LOUIS A. HOLMES
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY LAWTON KENNEDY
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

1765883

DEDICATED TO MY SON
LIEUTENANT LARIE W. HOLMES, U.S.M.C.
AND TO
MY DAUGHTER SONNA L. HOLMES

P R E F A C E

American history with special emphasis upon what is arbitrarily termed, the period of the "Winning of the West, 1790-1890" has always interested me. Things Military have naturally fit into such events. The expanding of our nation westward under the tireless and fearless fur traders-mountain men, first brought my attention to the importance of Fort Atkinson, 1819-1827, on the Council Bluff located in the Nebraska hills near the present Fort Calhoun. This interest spread to include all the forts of Nebraska: first as Indian Country,¹ as a Territory and, then, as a State.

My attention focused on Fort McPherson south of Maxwell, Nebraska, when a friend of mine, Corporal Robert T. Mentzer, Company K, Third Marines, was brought back from Iwo Jima for interment at the National Cemetery located there. Upon inquiry as to books or a history about this fort, I learned little was known or was apparently available. My curiosity aroused—the search was on. The official records of the Fort, in monthly reports and in medical reports, 1863-1880, which have been preserved by the National Archives and Record Service, War Records Branch, of Washington, D. C., were secured on microfilm. These in turn were projected on a screen and typed into useable form. In this manner, many of the actual events have been made use of and included. All available books in the library of the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Grand Island Public Library have been examined. The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies from the library at the Soldiers and Sailors Home located in Grand Island have been useful.

We who live in Nebraska are prone to forget the glorious traditions and stirring events that have transpired within the boundaries of our state.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My humble thanks are due to the following:

For the encouragement, assistance and counsel of James C. Olson, Head History Department, University of Nebraska;

To John B. White, Director of Library of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the staff, for their tireless help in searching for and furnishing materials requested, and for many courtesies;

To Marvin F. Kivett, Museum Director, Nebraska State Historical Society, many thanks.

Special thanks to the late William H. McDonald, banker and outstanding citizen of North Platte, Nebraska, who was born at Cottonwood Springs June 14, 1861, and spent his early boyhood at the Fort and who was personally acquainted with many of the people noted herein; a man who has lived the pages of history in the great struggle to win and hold the Western frontier. Thanks, too, to Miss Janet McDonald of North Platte for her courtesy and helpfulness.

To the late Robert D. Rasmusson of North Platte, Nebraska, a tireless worker and compiler of the records of the men who are buried in this National Cemetery at Fort McPherson.

To John Neukirch, former Superintendent of Fort McPherson National Cemetery, for furnishing available material and records.

To my former secretary, Dorothea R. Buck, for many tiring and tedious hours, copying from original records and typing numerous drafts.

To my son, Larie Wendell Holmes, as a travelling partner and confidant on many trips gathering data and tramping the actual sites of operations.

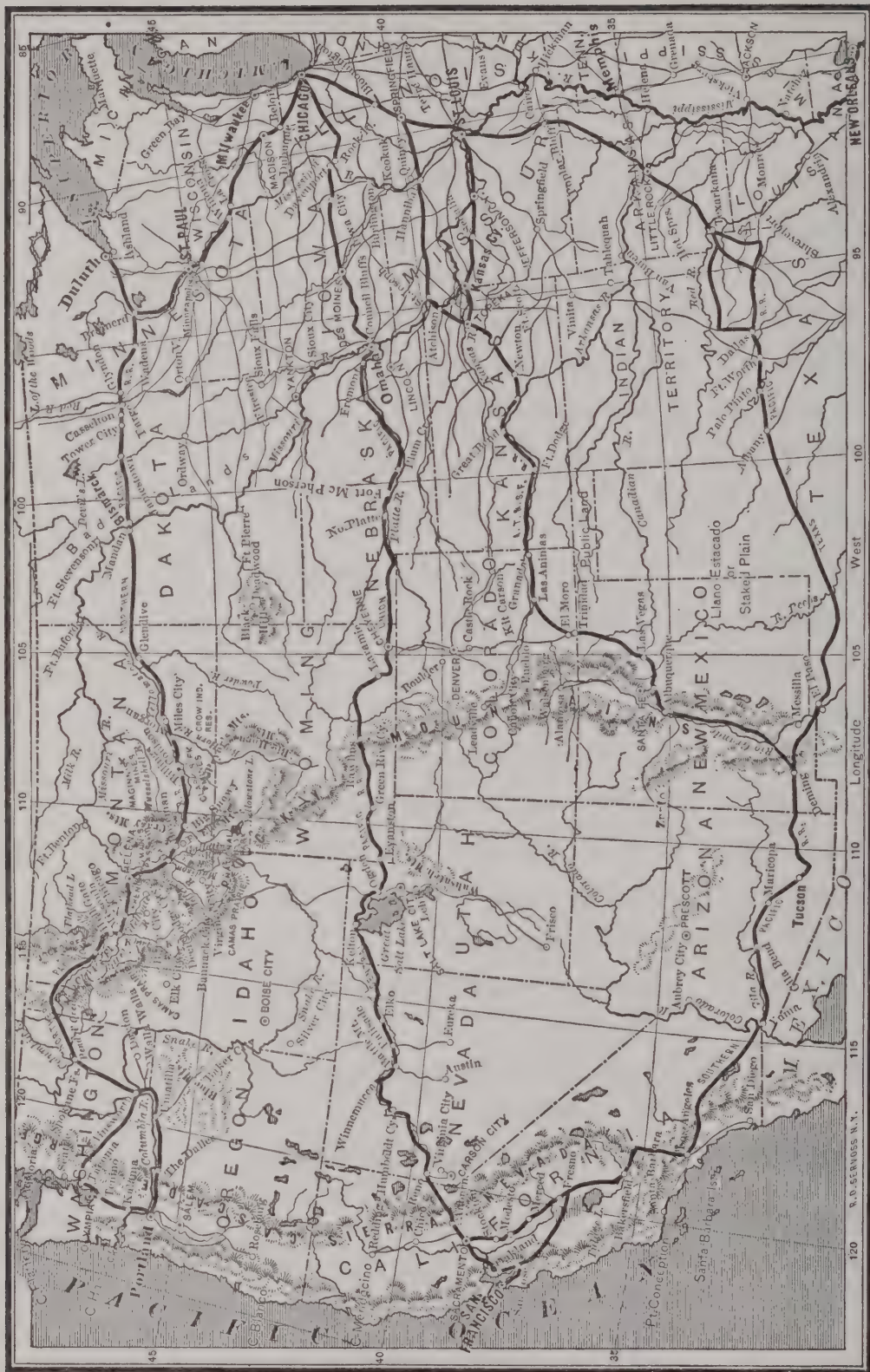
To Stanley Vestal, noted writer and authority of the mountain men, Indians and the winning of the West, for encouragement and whose books have been an inspiration.

To Nellie Yost of North Platte, Nebraska, authoress, historian and tireless worker on behalf of Western history.

Thanks also to others who have assisted in reading copy and who have offered warm encouragement.

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FORT MCPHERSON AT THE TIME OF ITS FULL STRENGTH
Nebraska State Historical Society



MCDONALD RANCH ERECTED IN 1860, COTTONWOOD SPRINGS, N.T.
Nebraska State Historical Society

PART I

THE BEGINNINGS OF A FORT

As the cold grey of early dawn of January 15, 1865, was breaking in the east, the crisp, clear bugle notes sounded "Boots and Saddles." The entire fort was alerted. There was the hurrying of booted cavalry troopers, the clatter of equipment, the stomping of long lines of horses in the dimly lighted stables. The curt and brusque orders of sergeants in charge of various details could be heard coming from all along the line. An expedition was preparing to move south into the Republican River Valley. This field force consisted of two companies of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, troops of the First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry, and Companies B and C of the First Nebraska Militia (mounted), along with 100 mule wagons for equipment and supplies, four twelve-pound mountain howitzers and two three-inch Parrot guns. In all, 640 cavalry men and supply train, under command of Colonel R. R. Livingston, 1st Reg. Nebr. Cav. Vet. Vols., had been ordered by Brig. Gen. Robert B. Mitchell, District Commander, to take the field.¹

This and similar scenes were to be reenacted many times at Fort Cottonwood in the turbulent years that lay ahead.

Fort Cottonwood, as it was then known, was one of the thin lines of defenses spreading westward. It was of vital importance that the West be held as a part of the nation. The South, it was alleged, in its strategy of the Civil War, was inciting the Indians, causing the Union Army to divert troops from the eastern and southern fronts to cope with this ever increasing peril on their western flank.²

This danger became apparent to the high command of the Northern forces in the early months of the war. The unrest among the Indians, from the tribes in the deep South to those bordering on the Canadian line, was continuously appearing in daily reports. The crisis became of major importance with the bloody massacre of hundreds of settlers in southern Minnesota starting August 17, 1862.³

This critical situation spread to the west and south rapidly enveloping Nebraska Territory in its sweeping flame. The emergency created was so pressing that the then acting Territorial Governor sent for military protection and assistance from the Federal Government.

Omaha, N. T., September 9, 1862

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.

Powerful bands of Indians are retiring from Minnesota into the northern counties of this Territory. Settlers by hundreds are fleeing. Instant action is demanded. I can turn out a militia force, a battery of 3 pieces of 6-pounders, and from 6 to 10 companies of cavalry and mounted infantry. The territory is without credit or a cent of money. Authorize me by telegraph to act for the General Government in providing immediate defense, and I can do all that is necessary with our militia, if subsisted and paid by government.

[Signed] A. S. PADDOCK

Secretary and Acting Governor of Nebraska⁴

The broad valley of the Platte was the pathway to the Pacific coast and to the frontier. California was being pressured from all sides to come into the Confederacy and repudiate the Union. President Lincoln was fully advised of the significance and possibility of losing the frontier territories and California. To protect against this in the over-all war effort to preserve the Union, orders were initiated to strengthen the North's line of defenses in the West. Manpower was at a low ebb. There were few seasoned troops available. The draft as it is known today was not available; instead a conscription plan, weakly administered, was used by the National Government.

In the earlier conception of the Westward movement along the Oregon Trail, Fort Kearny had been established in 1848 at the head of Grand Island, in the Territory of Nebraska. In 1849 Fort Laramie in what is now Wyoming was acquired by purchase from the American Fur Company. This left over 300 miles to be guarded between these military posts.

By mid 1863 the need for a military establishment between these crucial points took shape. Orders were issued in 1863, on September 18, by the Department of Nebraska directing that a detachment of Company G of the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry proceed to Cottonwood Springs and there erect a fort.⁵

As the detachment of Cavalry troopers slowly approached old Cottonwood Springs, after having been in the saddle several hours, they were greeted with a primitive scene. The spring was located on the south side of the Platte River near the mouth of what is known as Cottonwood Canyon. An old, gnarled cottonwood marked the spot where the thirst quenching waters had flowed through the untold years. Just behind the spring, the countryside rises into a chain of hills which make up a plateau extending southward toward the Republican River Valley. The trail being followed by the troops was

the famous Oregon Trail wending its way into the great Northwest. Along this same pathway the Indians for generations had traversed the plains from east to west, as had the early fur trappers and mountain men, the lonely Indian trader, the emigrant, the pony express, the long lines of freighters and the stagecoach. The mouth of Cottonwood Canyon had been strategically selected for a fort for the reason that it also was a long used trail for the Indian tribes moving north and south.⁶ Also the California Trail and Mormon Trail located just across the Platte River to the north.

A few rods west of the springs stood a large, rambling trading establishment of Charles McDonald. The troopers, tired and dusty, quenched their thirst at the large well in front of the store building which served both as a home and a trading post. The hospitality extended by the McDonalds to the new arrivals was warm and cordial. A camping area was selected and all hands turned to the preparation of their campsite. Temporary quarters were first established, then the actual erection of permanent buildings started.

In those days the canyons to the south were filled with tall cedars.⁷ Work details were soon busily engaged in chopping, trimming and snaking the logs to the selected point. Others were busy sawing, notching, roofing, and "carrying up corners." The air was stimulating, for the chill of autumn was at hand. This added zest to the work to hurry it on so as to be under a roof before winter set in. By the first snow, several buildings had been completed. Though window glass was not available, the soldiers were glad to move in, for the cold of the lengthening nights was sharp.⁸

The first post erected was named Cantonment McKean, but shortly thereafter the name was changed to Post Cottonwood; then to Fort Cottonwood by which it was known for several years.⁹

The winter of '63 and '64 passed slowly with all hands being kept busy with the regular duties of policing the area, mounted drills, artillery practice with the two small howitzers that went to make the heavy armament of this fort. As weather permitted, more buildings were being erected or additions added to enlarge the post.

The daily routine at the Fort was broken on occasion by the jangle and clatter of the stagecoaches swinging up for their regular stop to change horses and grant a short relaxation for the tired and heavily armed passengers. The most dangerous part of the trail was then between Fort Kearny to the east and Fort Cottonwood. The stage stations were spaced about every ten miles or so along the route.

These stations were tended by one or two hands who fed and guarded the extra relief horses between stage runs. The relief teams were changed in a hurry and away the coach would lurch over the tedious and dangerous trail—the occupants dusty and stifled with heat or stiff and shivering from the extreme cold according to the season.¹⁰

PART II

THE STRUGGLE OF '64 AND '65

In hope of relieving the increasing tension, General Robert B. Mitchell, District Commander, arranged for a council with the Sioux tribes. The date selected was April 17, 1864; the place, Fort Cottonwood.

As the appointed day drew near, Indians began gathering in large numbers, camping about two miles west of the Fort as directed by the call to council. With so many warriors at hand, the entire Command was on a 24-hour alert. On the morning of the chosen day, 100 leading warriors approached the Post on their best horses and arrayed in all their finery. As was the custom for all peace talks the Indians, when near the selected meeting spot, left all visible arms with a guard, dismounted and strode forward in silence. The officers who had been detailed to sit in on the conference by General Mitchell came forward in full dress uniform. They, too, put down all visible arms. Both groups were sure that the other carried weapons secreted on their person, caution being the better part of valor.

The meeting was held in a newly erected building within the compound of the post. The Indians squatted on one side while the Army personnel sat opposite facing them. Silence reigned and the solemnity of the occasion was apparent. After some time had thus passed, the Indians brought forth a "Peace Pipe" which was lighted and slowly passed around the room. As each Indian took a puff, a little ritual ensued, and the pipe was then passed with dignity to the next warrior. After all the Indians present had taken their turn with this symbol of peace, it was passed to the officers who each in turn went through the accepted procedure.

The Indians present represented the Sioux tribes that bordered the Military jurisdiction of the Fort. From the south came the Ogallallah (meaning split-off band) under Chief Bad Wound; from the northeast came the Minneconjous (meaning shallow waters); while from the northwest came the horsemen of the plains, the Brules (meaning burnt thighs) under Shantag-a-lisk, better known as Spotted Tail, who was the recognized leader among all tribes present. Some lesser chiefs—Two Strike, Two Crows, The Big Mandan, Prickley Pear, and Eagle Twice—were in attendance.

General Mitchell opened the meeting through his interpreter by complimenting the Sioux, but telling them that the Great White Chief wanted his Indian brothers to stay out of the Platte Valley, that the great trails to the west passed that way and the presence of Indians distressed the white emigrants. After slowly warming up to the occasion, the Big Mandan arose to his full height and addressed the General and his staff. He said that the Platte Valley had little of value to them because during the intervening years since the first White had migrated westward, the countryside was completely hunted out—forcing the game animals such as buffalo, deer, elk and antelope to move to other areas; that even the grasses were fast being destroyed by heavy pasturing and fires carelessly started by the emigrants. He further stated that the Sioux wanted it clearly understood that, though the Whites had been permitted to pass that way, the Platte Valley and all the territory north to the Niobrara River and south to the Smoky Hill River was their land and they had no intention of letting any of it go. He further stated that the White man never kept his promise—though the Indian respected the soldiers, they had great distrust for the Government agents who cheated on all sides—that the White man permitted whiskey to be sold by Whites which was destroying the Red man—that the Whites were bluffing and faking by trying to make their numbers appear greater than actually existed.

This attitude on the part of the Indians rankled the General a great deal. He then made his demands direct and stated that unless the Sioux stayed away from the Platte Valley, it would be necessary to use force.

These threats by Mitchell nettled the Chiefs, who responded by saying that under no circumstances would they budge an inch until proper treaties were entered into and fully observed in every detail by the Whites; that the military expedition to the Niobrara must stop; that the Smoky Hill road to the south be closed completely, for the best buffalo country existed south of the Platte and around the Smoky Hill River, and the encroachments of the Whites were ruining hunting. The General felt the council was heading for a dangerous impasse. To avoid this, he suggested that all those present think over the problem at hand and reconvene at the same place fifty days hence.¹

With spring well on the way, the Confederacy was putting on all possible pressure to force the North to transfer more troops from the eastern and southern fronts. Examples of reactions of troops in the field was as follows:

Owing to troubles reported from the South, Company "G" which was at our post, started May 2nd for Fort Kearny, from which post they went directly to Fort Riley, Kansas. Fort Riley was at the junction of the Republican River, upon which the Indians were very numerous, and, owing to emissaries from the Southern Confederacy, that country was becoming very dangerous ground. From time to time we heard that emissaries from the Confederacy were making inflammatory speeches, and doing their best to alienate the southern Cheyennes, because such emissaries would be shot if they fell into our hands. Nevertheless, there were rumors that efforts were being made in the Indian villages north and northwest of us.²

Our understanding was that the Cheyennes and Comanches had been thoroughly aroused by Confederate officers, and there were reports that some bands of Indians, not desiring to join the uprising had killed some of the Confederate Ambassadors. I afterwards remember seeing a report that the Osages had killed eight Confederate officers under like circumstances, in one bunch. At any rate, the Confederate officers had arrayed the Indians against us as far as Kansas and southern Nebraska were concerned, but the Brules were principally north of the Platte River. It was about this time that through Mr. Gilman we were informed that an Indian runner had said a Cheyenne chief had been up through the bands of the Brule Sioux north of the river, showing a sergeant's cavalry jacket, his watch and paraphernalia as trophies, and was instituting war dances. We were told that this would, of course, eventually precipitate the Brule Sioux upon us. We kept careful guard around our Post, to prevent an ambush or surprise. We could be surprised only from one quarter, and that was toward the south. One man could keep view of the country east, west and north of us, but there was nothing to prevent the Indians from hiding in the ramifications of Cottonwood Canyon, and making a dash at the Post.

So we had Cottonwood Canyon and its prongs inspected every day, and at night after dark we ran a picket-post well up into the Canyon, and had the pickets signaled every thirty minutes. The way was this: After dark we went up quietly with a strong body, say twenty men, on foot, and nestled into some protected corner, and then put out pickets. We had no loud hailing or calling of pickets, but the one who visited the picket was to go stealthily or crawl on the ground. The hailing-sign was by raps with a pebble upon the saber scabbard. If he could not find the picket when he thought he had gone near enough, the inspector gave three raps, to which the picket should respond with two, then a reply of one, and counter reply of one.³

The military command required civilian assistance from time to time to perform varied tasks. One Washington Hinman was hired as post interpreter at a salary of \$50.00 per month and rations. The early Post Returns for May, 1864, show an Alfred Gay and a John Smith, Indian scouts, gone into the Indian country among the Cheyennes for information concerning the movements of those hostile Indians. These gentlemen were to be paid for their services \$100.00 each and rations.⁴ What a pleasant way to spend a spring vacation!

The Sioux tribes continued to indicate that they were willing to quit the warpath and live at peace with the Whites, while the Cheyenne tribes were violently opposed and were openly advocating total

war. The two scouts, Smith and Gay, were to carry an invitation to the chiefs of the various tribes to come to the fort for council. It was hoped to slow down the activities of the Cheyennes by bringing pressure upon them by other tribes.

The reports of that meeting give such an insight into the white man's philosophy and the red man's reaction that the same are set forth herein verbatim:

Major C. S. Charlot.
Asst. Adj-Gen. Dept. of Kansas

Omaha City, Nebr. Terr.
June 18, 1864

Major: I have the honor to enclose herewith minutes of a council held with Brule and Ogallala Sioux, June 8, 1864 at Cottonwood Springs, Nebr. Terr., report of spies sent out from Cottonwood Springs in pursuance of my instructions, into the Cheyenne and Sioux country. These papers were forwarded by Major G. M. O'Brien.

Robert B. Mitchell
Brigadier-General

In pursuance (of) an invitation from these headquarters, dated May 31, 1864, the following Indian chief's reported with their braves, to hold a council: O-A-Sheu-Cha or Bad Wound, Con-qu-num-pa or Two Crows, Zo-lah or Whistler, Cut-tig-a-lisha or Spotted Tail, Two Strikes, Long Face, Little Thunder authorized Spotted Tail to represent him in council as he was sick and unable to attend.

By Major G. M. O'Brien, Commanding

Question: In case you had a fight, which side would you take, Cheyenne or White?

Answer: We cannot be forced to fight on either side; we do not want to fight the Cheyennes, and will not fight the Whites, as the Whites could kill all of us. We want to be permitted to live and hunt our game where we are allowed to hunt. We also want a White man with us to show you we intend to do as agreed, and in order to prevent us from being attacked by your soldiers, not knowing us. We now are gathering all our people together and will not allow any of them to scatter until this war is over between the Whites and the Cheyennes. There are some of our young men among the Cheyennes, but we ordered them home. All have now come, except six women who are married to Cheyenne men. We have now together 210 lodges and expect some more. We want to be told from time to time what is wanted of us to do. We want our goods distributed to us on the north side of the Platte about ten miles above this point, as we are so poor and our horses so few we cannot go to Fort Laramie to receive them. It would not pay us for our trouble, and if we do not go we are afraid that you and our White brothers will think we mean to be hostile, which is not the case.

The Commander: I cannot give you any assurance that your goods will be distributed where you want them, but will recommend it be done this time; however, you must not think it will be done because I say I will recommend it. The Government wants to do what is best for you; they (Indians understand Government to mean white people acting together as one man) want you to live peaceably among your-

selves and with your white brothers. Occasionally you will find foolish and bad White men that may want to make trouble with you. Do not mind them, but report them to these headquarters and they will be punished. I also want to warn you that any of your people found committing any depredations will also be punished, and should you fail to give such as commit any crime up to us when demanded you will be treated as enemies and punished as White men have been accustomed to punish you, for instance as Harney treated you.

Reply: We have said all we want to know is what to do and we would do it. We will do as you have said you want us to. We have some robes and peltries that we want to trade for food and clothes, and want traders allowed to go to our village, situated south of Plum Creek. Our agent, Major Lord, would not let any but one man trade with us, and that man had only little goods for so many Indians, so we are bad off for many things. We were afraid to come on the road, as we had heard that you would kill us, so we now have more to trade than we want to bring on the road and want traders.

Commander: Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Comanches had a fight with soldiers on Island Creek; killed two officers and one soldier and wounded two more that since died. Cheyennes lost two chiefs and one brave. Soldiers fought two days, then went south (fighting as they go) to Fort Lyon. There may have been more Indians. Cheyennes have killed two ranchmen on the Santa Fe Road, and say they will kill all the Whites on both the Platte Valley and Santa Fe roads, and they will try to do so. They will fight as long as they can, then go south to the Arkansas River and escape.

Question: What do you think of the Cheyennes in making war on the Whites?

Answer: We think they are fools, and will all be killed.

Question: Have you any more to say? I am done.

Answer: We are happy and glad to meet you and shake hands with our White brothers in token of friendship, to show them that our hearts are good. We wanted to come and see you long ago, but were afraid. When we got your invitation we were all glad. Our wives and children and head men all cried for joy. So now we all shake hands with you as a token of friendship and good feeling. (Here all shake hands and after that smoke.)

Washington M. Hinman
Indian Interpreter

The written report of the two scouts, Gay and Smith, of their venture, was made a part of the official report to the District Command.

Major George M. O'Brien
Commanding

Fort Cottonwood
June 10, 1864

In accordance with instructions from you, delivered on the 2nd instant, to proceed forthwith into the country of the Cheyenne and Sioux Indians, and gather all information which would be of service to the Government in regard to impending hostilities between the whites and Cheyennes and other Indians, and further to

collect a delegation of Indians from the Ogallala and Brule tribes of Sioux, and bring them to this Post for the purpose of holding a council, we herewith make the following report, which is respectfully submitted: Our course from Fort Cottonwood was due south to Medicine Lake Creek, a distance of thirty miles, to a Sioux village consisting of forty lodges, where we secured the services of three braves as companions on the scout. From thence down Medicine Lake Creek (southeast) 65 miles, to its confluence with the Republican River; thence down the Republican River (east) 40 miles, to a point immediately opposite the mouth of Plum Creek, (on Platte), where the main Sioux village, consisting of 210 lodges, was found; thence north to the Platte, 40 miles, thence west 50 miles to Fort Cottonwood. The first day out, between this Post and Medicine Lake Creek, we discovered Indians at a distance whose actions were suspicious. The following day we proceeded down Medicine Lake Creek 30 miles, when we were suddenly surrounded by a party of 20 Cheyennes, not, however, without us observing them first, but supposed them to be Sioux. Their actions were very hostile, they threatened and at the same time made efforts to kill us, but the interference of our Sioux friends, who assured them that we were not soldiers, but men who had had Sioux wives, and lived in the country, saved us. We were allowed to depart, but strictly watched for the following night and day, when we reached the main Sioux village, and were well received, the Sioux expressing their indignation at such treatment of their friends.

We presented our letters of invitation to council to the principal chiefs, and the following day was fixed for their departure to the Post. It is the impression of the Sioux generally that the Cheyennes and their allies will attack the settlements on the Platte at an early day, destroying all who may come within their reach, and at the same time supply themselves with horses, arms, ammunition in order to prosecute the war more vigorously. The hostile Indians are camped on Island Creek, about fifty miles north of Fort Larned, and are supposed to number 1200 lodges; each lodge will turn out 3 warriors. These 1200 lodges include Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Comanches, and Kiowas. They are generally well armed (the Cheyennes particularly) with good rifles and revolvers. For the past five years the Cheyennes have been trading revolvers to fight the Pawnees. They procure large quantities of ammunition from the Mexicans on the Arkansas River. They design to divide, half going to the Platte River to destroy ranches, murder emigrants, and take horses and mules; the other half of them doing the same on the Arkansas River. They, if pressed, will take their plunder and cross the Arkansas River going south into the Apache and Comanche country. They have their spies out in every direction; they are met on the Platte traveling as Sioux, watching the movements of troops that they may warn their friends of danger. Their scouts are on almost every creek. They are in the Sioux camp and are determined not to be surprised. The Colorado Battery, in charge of Lieut. Eayre, is supposed to have reached either Fort Larned or Fort Wise with the loss of only six men. When last heard from they were retreating south keeping up a running fight. The large guns are reported to have done no execution, none of the shells having exploded. They were loaded repeatedly with bar lead, cut into small pieces and fired. The battery corraled on a plateau or high level prairie, 2 miles from water, where the Sioux report them to have fought 2 days. Were supposed to be short of ammunition. Two Cheyenne chiefs were killed and one brave. When the fight commenced runners were dispatched to the camps of the Arapahoes, Kiowas

and Comanches, who were not far off. They have since consolidated. The Sioux were also sent for but refused to join them. It is reported by many Indians that the Arapahoes also refused to join them. Nothing has been heard from any other expedition that may be in the country.

Alfred Gay

John W. Smith⁵

On June 8th the second council was held by General Mitchell at Fort Cottonwood and ended with little or no success. At the conclusion of the gathering, it was agreed that all present would again re-assemble in 50 days for further negotiations.

The depredations and marauding of Sioux and Cheyenne war parties were increasing and daily becoming more violent. General Mitchell was highly agitated and gave serious thought to notifying the tribes that the third meeting set for July 19, 1864, had been called off for he knew that if this conference failed, it might incite a total and immediate uprising. As a last resort, he made his plans—all emigrant trains were halted and corralled, the troops were fully alerted and armed.

For the third gathering the General chose a subject that had nothing to do with the former discussions—he prepared to present the Pawnee Peace Plan, whereby the Sioux tribes who had been continuously at war with the Pawnee would “bury the hatchet” and live at peace with their red brother.

The site selected for this meeting was a meadow about three miles east of the Fort. At the appointed hour the General and his staff, in full dress, with Company D 7th Iowa Cavalry, along with the Pawnee Scout Battalion under Major Frank North as escort, arrived. The Sioux, instead of sending their chiefs, as directed, had brought along all their women and children, camp equipment, dogs and extra horses, all in one noisy agitated group. Upon seeing the Pawnee, excitement spread like wildfire, each group started edging toward the other, shouting and taunting. The situation was critical and immediate action was necessary. General Mitchell issued orders to Company D to form a line from where the General was seated on his horse, to the river, spacing themselves about fifty yards apart, each trooper with sabre drawn, facing alternately toward the east and the west so as to have the Sioux and Pawnee under full supervision. Both groups of Indians were ordered back so that some distance intervened.

Thus commenced one of the most colorful and volatile gatherings ever staged on the western frontier.

The General then handed his sabre to an orderly and directed him

to ride to a central point and stab it into the ground. This point was to be reserved for the speaker as the Sioux and the Pawnee sent forward their spokesmen alternately. Each speaker was to come to the side of the gleaming sabre alone to expound his thoughts.

In all there were 190 white men which included the troops and the civilians from the wagon trains which had halted as per order and 80 Pawnee. The Sioux were represented by 400 warriors plus unnumbered old men, youths, and boys.

To make the opening as effective as possible, a bugler was ordered forward to give the call "to assemble," first to one group and then to the other, then to wheel his horse and gallop back to his post. Then the two light howitzers were unlimbered and a salvo was fired to further impress the mighty Sioux to be cautious.

General Mitchell then opened with his remarks to the effect that the Great White Father wanted peace among the various tribes so that each could live with the other; that there was plenty for all, and that fighting only brought on more fighting with resulting bloodshed, loss of life and sorrow.

The first Indian speakers started slowly and rambled in their talks but as the meeting progressed, each grew more heated in his remarks. The Sioux shouted, bragged and strutted. They admitted that they were the best fighters and intended to take what they pleased. The Pawnee told how in olden times they had owned all these lands, even the land where they were gathered that day; that they had for many years held all the lands from the Niobrara on the north to the Smoky Hill River on the south, and from the Elkhorn on the east to the forks of the Platte in the west as their domain. How the scourge of small-pox had cut down their great nation by the thousands. That the Sioux had come in the last few years having been driven out onto the plains by stronger eastern tribes. That the Pawnee were at peace with the White man and were willing to do their share in living at peace with the Sioux—if there was cooperation.

The response of the Sioux grew steadily more vile until one speaker shouted that he saw no reason for any change—the Sioux Nation was doing all right—that the Pawnee spoke with "forked tongues" and played up to the Whites, and all these fine words from the General about peace were empty because if the Great White Father could not stop his White children from fighting among themselves, how could he expect the Red men not to fight.

The tirades and shouting of the Sioux angered the General and he

issued a direct order that the Sioux get out of the Platte Valley and stay out—or else.

By this time the sun was getting low in the west and the tension was extreme. The Sioux hesitated, then started moving their entire cavalcade north across the river, shouting and chanting as they rode along. As they slowly disappeared from sight far to the north, their faint shouts could still be heard.⁶

The beginning of a period of great violence was fast shaping into full reality and many years were to pass before it was concluded.

In the early morning of August 7th, two wagon trains were attacked near Plum Creek Station 50 miles east of Fort Cottonwood, and all persons were killed or made captive. The bodies of those left behind were terribly mutilated. Most of the wagons were burned and the horses and mules driven off. This tragic event is known as the Plum Creek Massacre.⁷

On August 7th and 8th the Indians, thoroughly inflamed, attacked all along the trail between Fort Kearny and Julesburg, Colorado Territory, destroying, killing and ravaging everything before them. Several settlers in the surrounding area near Fort Cottonwood were killed. Many more would have lost their lives but for the fact word had been flashed by the telegraph to all nearby stations, enabling the settlers to flee to Fort Cottonwood or ready their own defenses. Some ranchers were more determined than others. They fortified their ranch houses with sod walls and extra logs. In some instances the same precautions were taken in protecting the sheds and corrals. Ammunition, food and water was secured in as large a quantity as possible. Firing positions were prepared. Then those gathered, readied themselves for the long tedious vigil, day and night. No one knowing whether to expect a full assault of mounted warriors or a silent stealthy approach at some unexpected or unguarded moment.⁸

As the fall of the year approached, and the violence of the Indians increased, a disastrous event occurred at Fort Cottonwood on September 20, 1864. It seems that scurvy had broken out at the Fort and that the post hospital did not have the necessary facilities and supplies to cope with this disease. The staff doctor in attendance recommended that the patients so afflicted should obtain as much fruit as possible.

The morning of the 20th broke clear and bright with the freshness of a western autumn day. In nearby Cottonwood Canyon to the south there were numerous plum thickets filled with lush ripe fruit. A Captain Mitchell, apparently no kin of General Mitchell, along with a

Corporal Anderson and an orderly, loaded up seven patients in an ambulance and drove south down the broad based canyon. The first thickets they came to had been picked by others before them, so they went on farther to a point about seven miles from the Post. Here they came upon two troopers who had been detailed to round up some stray mules, but who had paused to refresh themselves with the wild fruits. Everyone was in good spirits.

There had been no Indians seen in these parts for some time. They felt quite secure with these additional two able-bodied men, making in all five armed in the group.

The outing ended abruptly with the crisp crack of rifles almost upon them. A few Indians were seen coming from some nearby bushes firing as they advanced. Immediately all the patients climbed in the creaking canvas covered ambulance with Captain Mitchell, Anderson and the orderly, and they started at a full gallop down the canyon. The two troopers had mounted and were beating a hasty retreat. One of them, who was riding a mule, could not keep up and was badly wounded; in his weakened condition the attackers soon overtook him, killing him and rushing on in hot pursuit. As the ambulance came lurching around a bend, they could see coming toward them another larger band of warriors cutting off all avenues of escape.

Captain Mitchell seeing that they were about to be surrounded, ordered the driver to drive up the side of the canyon wall and make for the tableland above in an attempt to get around the war party and head for the Fort.

The Captain was armed with one of the famous Henry rifles that had won respect from all who learned to know its death-dealing powers. He also had a pair of revolvers in his belt. Anderson was armed with a Spencer repeating rifle that was later to prove its value to the frontier. The orderly had his revolver and the regular issue, single shot Sharps Carbine. The patients were unarmed.

The mounted Indians began to gain on the ambulance and, while hanging on the opposite side of their pony for protection, would gallop by firing from under its neck. Captain Mitchell knew that it would not be long before the attackers would have them completely surrounded. He shouted to halt the ambulance so that they could make a stand, feeling that their fire-power would keep the Indians back until someone might hear the shooting and spread the alarm and bring a rescue force from the Fort. The driver apparently was as frightened as the horses dragging the vehicle of mercy for he made no

effort to restrain the team but gave them even greater encouragement.

As the story goes, Captain Mitchell told Anderson to take the lines and in attempting to do so, Anderson fell from the wagon. The Captain then jumped to put on the brakes but a sudden lurch pitched him out headlong into a gully. As this happened, the Indians were out of sight for a brief time behind a rise in the the ground and did not see the two fall out. Anderson in falling had held on to his rifle, while the Captain had only his two revolvers. The two men were some distance apart in their hiding places. Suddenly someone discovered Anderson's location and the warriors spread out and opened fire. Certain braves, wanting to show how fearless they were, rose up to get a better shot. In a split second there was a burst of flame from the Spencer rifle, and there was one less red man. In all, nine Indians met their death on this lonely prairie before Anderson was wounded and captured. He struggled to the very last until life was gone. The warriors were bitter with their losses and mutilated the trooper's body, wreaking their full vengeance upon the lifeless form before them. Throughout this orgy of blood, Captain Mitchell lay hidden close by, powerless to render any effective help.

Shortly thereafter the remainder of the war party rode up and announced that they had overtaken the ambulance and killed all those present. The Indians then picked up their dead and headed back south toward the Republican Valley leaving their enemy behind. Captain Mitchell reached the Fort late that night to report the tragedy which is known as the "Cottonwood Massacre."⁹

Another account of this tragic event is found in the Official Union Army report from Lieutenant Thomas Flangan.¹⁰ The Lieutenant, attached to another outfit, had become ill while his command was stopping briefly at Fort Cottonwood to rest and get supplies. His report stated that while he was in the hospital, a party of eight soldiers of the 7th Iowa were sent out to gather some wild plums for the sick. That while they were so occupied at a point about three miles from the post, they were attacked by a party of sixty or seventy Indians. Four of the troopers were killed, the others were able to escape to the Fort. The next day the commanding officer sent out a searching party in wagons. They found the bodies, badly mangled, but gave up the search for the Indians due to the rough terrain.

Probably no better account of the times and the military development of the Northern forces in and around Fort Cottonwood to offset the flaming uprising of the Indians is given than in Colonel R. R.

Livingston's report of November 1, 1864.¹¹ (See Appendix C, page 82)

The Colonel, commanding officer of the First Regiment Nebraska Cavalry, tells how when he was placed in charge of the Eastern sub-district of Nebraska territory his assignment covered over 400 miles of country from the Missouri River on the east to and including Julesburg, Colorado Territory, in the west. The Oregon Trail and the telegraph lines along the south side of the Platte and the Mormon Trail on the north bank. The Overland mail by stagecoach used the Oregon Trail. The troops at his disposal to guard this vast area consisted of one battalion Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, four companies of Nebraska Militia, together with thirteen pieces of artillery. All told this command numbered 971 men.

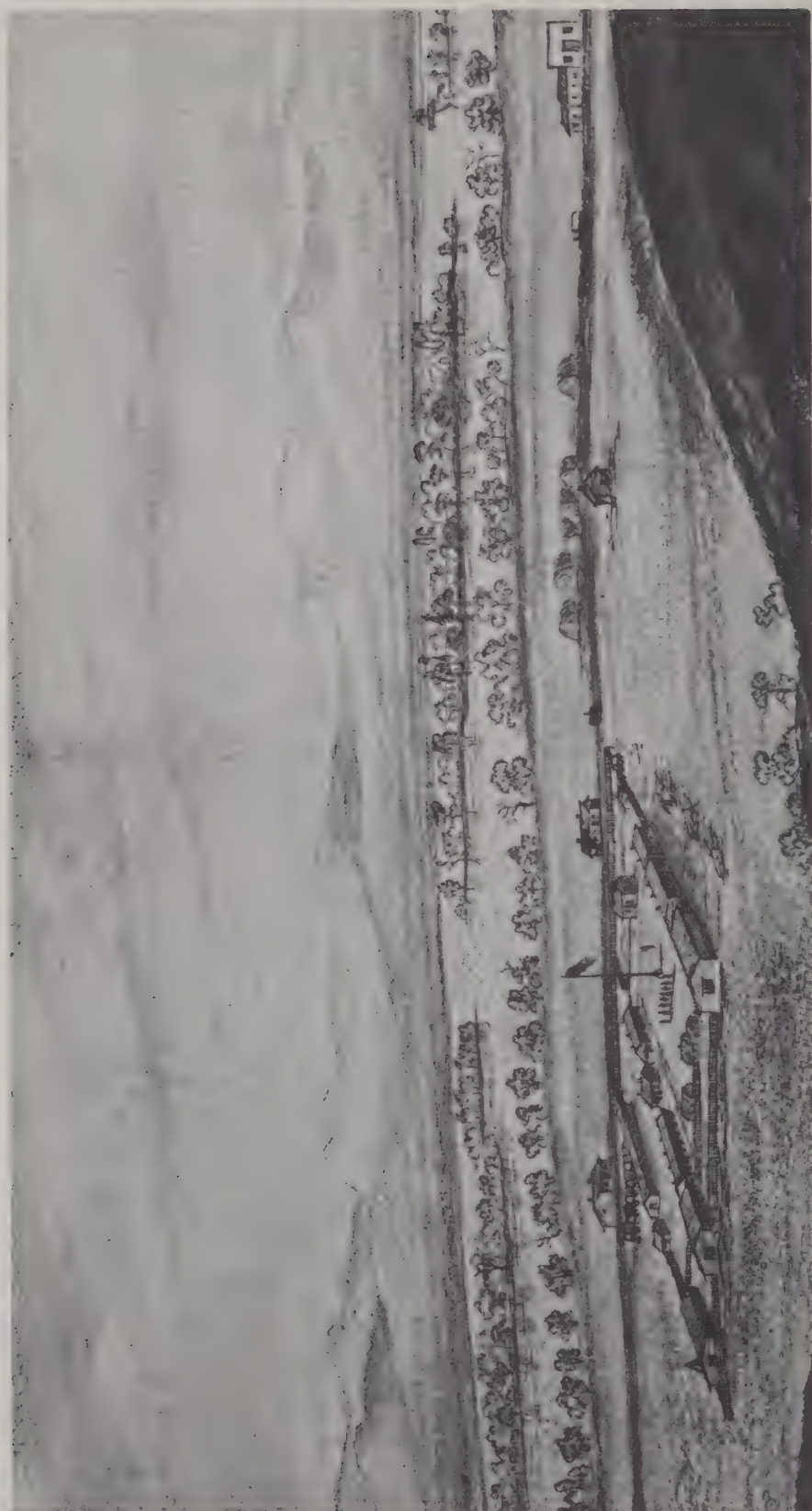
Colonel Livingston goes on to tell how at the time of his assumption of command of this district there were only two posts between the Missouri and Fort Laramie, namely, Fort Kearny and Fort Cottonwood. He described Fort Cottonwood as then having accommodations for 300 men and horses. His description of Fort Cottonwood is just the way we picture an old frontier post today. The buildings and stables all arranged in a rectangular form around the parade ground, with the whole being enclosed by a log stockade.

The Indians were totally aroused and were attacking anything and everything throughout the Nebraska Territory west. All stage coaches had to have continuous military protection as did all the wagon supply trains moving over the trails. Reconnaissance was constantly maintained over the area covering 60 to 100 miles on each side of the Platte.

The pressure with which the warring tribes maintained their harassing and destructive sorties was beginning to tell. All movement of freight and mail was greatly restricted and accomplished only with much difficulty. Colonel Livingston doesn't state from whence he received his orders or authority but he describes how under his direction on October 22, 1864, the prairies on the south side of the Platte were simultaneously fired from a point 20 miles west of Julesburg to a point 10 miles east of Fort Kearny. A strong northerly wind fanned the flames along this 200-mile front, burning and destroying all the way to the Republican River to the south. To complete the job, detachments of troopers were sent out to make certain that any valleys or areas that might have missed this holocaust of flame were also destroyed. The destruction of the grasses and the magnitude of the fires had driven all of the wild game, both large and small, from



OLD WELL AT FORT MCPHERSON
Warren Doolittle Collection



FORT COTTONWOOD, N.T.—MAJOR GEO. M. O'BRIEN'S SKETCH IN AUGUST, 1864

Joslyn Art Museum



OLD DRAWING OF FORT COTTONWOOD, WITH MAN AND GUN IN THE FOREGROUND

Nebraska State Historical Society

the area and had caused the tribes camping in these valleys to hurriedly break camp and scurry pell mell southward to avoid the onrushing flames.

It is difficult for one to realize the great expanse of these fires as described. The country south of the Platte was totally devastated. These tactics seldom are noted in the many tales of the winning of the West, but in all fairness, it seems fitting that the actual practices should be brought forward, especially when they are set forth as they are in the official records of those in command.

The country between Plum Creek (where Lexington now is) and Fort Cottonwood continued to be the most dangerous to travel with the reports showing many attacks on wagon trains, stagecoaches, and troops. Two orders issued by command of Colonel R. R. Livingston clearly show the urgency of the conditions.

Headquarters Eastern Sub-District of Nebraska

Fort Kearny, Nebr. Ter., November 27, 1864

William Reynolds, Esq.,

General Supt. O. S. Line, Fort Kearny, Nebr. Ter.:

Sir: In view of the frequent ambuscades by hostile Indians between this post and Fort Cottonwood, and the fact that nearly all these hostile demonstrations occur after darkness, I deem it essential to the safety of the U. S. mails and the lives of the passengers in your coaches that you make it incumbent on your division agent to run the coaches between this post and Cottonwood by daylight. I respectfully suggest the hour of 4 A.M. as a seasonable hour for the departure of the coach from this point for the west, and 3 A.M. for the departure of the coach going east from Cottonwood.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. R. LIVINGSTON,

Col. First Nebr. Cav. Vet. Cols.,

Cmdg. East Sub-District of Nebraska.

Headquarters Eastern Sub-District of Nebraska

Fort Kearny, Neb. Ter., November 28, 1864

Commanding Officer Post,

Fort Kearny, Plum Creek, Mullahla's,

Dan Smith's Ranch, Gillman's, Fort Cottonwood:

Sir: The colonel commanding directs that you do not permit any small trains to pass your post unless there are enough men with it to defend it against Indian attacks. As soon as another train arrives and in your judgment the combined trains are strong enough to resist Indian attacks, permit them to proceed.

By command of Col. R. R. Livingston:

E. A. McDONALD

First Lieut., First Nebr. Cav. Vet. Vols.,

Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen.¹²

The problem of food, supplies, repairs, ammunition and medicine was common to all who were engaged in the winning of the West, either as troopers, emigrant or settler. This was in addition to Indian troubles. To assist in meeting these many crying needs of supplies, the Government had established a large depot at Fort Kearny and a smaller one at Fort Cottonwood. Many emigrants from various causes often became stranded at different points on the trail. One of the most common being the inability to foresee their supply needs in the future situations. Few had ever ventured on expeditions. The Government was doing what it could to aid the needy would-be settlers besides supplying the troops stationed along the trail. Some idea of what was being done is told by a report made by Lieut. Charles Thompson, Quartermaster 1st Regiment Nebraska Cavalry.¹³ (*See Appendix C, p. 82*)

As the last year of the bloody struggle in the War between the States greeted the nation with the dawning of 1865, one of the most thrilling fights of the entire western conflict took place. It has been the central theme of books, movies and numerous stories. To make each reader feel the stark reality of this conflict, it is best told by one involved. Lieutenant Eugene F. Ware's intriguing account tells how he, along with Captain O'Brien and ten troopers with one howitzer, was ordered from Fort Cottonwood to Julesburg, Colorado Territory, to assist that community and Fort Sedgwick. Reports were that Indians were sighted and attacking all around that vicinity. This small military detail was joined by a stagecoach at Alkali Station, which was some miles east of Julesburg, carrying four heavily armed men who wanted to get through to Denver.

When the small party of men came within a mile or two of the Fort at Julesburg, they could see smoke billowing up into the sky ahead. From the trail they were following, the fort could not be seen for there was a small rise intervening. The appearance of smoke signified danger ahead so one of the party carefully approached the top of the hill and looked over the brow westward toward the stockade. What greeted his eyes stopped his breath for a second. There on the plain surrounding the stage station and the fort were hundreds of Indians galloping back and forth shouting and shooting their weapons at the fortifications. The stage station and stored hay was burning to the joyful glee of the Indians. The smoke from the flames tended to hang low and caused a more or less dense haze in the vicinity. When the one who had gone forward to size up the situation, returned with

the news of the danger that lay ahead, a hurried conference of all hands was had to determine what their next move should be. It was sheer luck that they had gotten this far without being discovered by someone who would have spread the alarm to the others. After covering all the possibilities, it was the consensus of the small detachment that the best chance was to make a charge directly toward the fort and fight their way to the gate. Everything was checked and made ready. Guns were examined to see if their primer caps were securely on the nipples and all shots properly seated in the chambers. The saddles and harnesses were looked over, and then moved forward slowly to the brow. From there they burst over in a full charge directly at the fort and the large groups of Indians cavorting in between. The smoky condition made it difficult to clearly discern who or what a person was at a distance which was, no doubt, the reason that the Indians did not realize what was really happening until the group galloping about the stage coach was half way to the safety of the fort. When they suddenly became aware of what actually was happening, their first instinct was to shy away out of gun range leaving an avenue down the center. No doubt they thought this was the advance party of an approaching column of troops sent to relieve Fort Sedgwick. Several precious minutes sped by permitting the advancing whites to get closer to the walls and safety. When full realization dawned upon the attacking warriors, a mighty howl was emitted from all sides as warriors galloped their horses at full speed in an attempt to cut off the charge. The troopers and civilians had all held their fire until last. So when the first blast of gun fire struck the red skins who were riding to intercept the small detail from Fort Cottonwood, several horses were riderless.

The effectiveness of the withering fire stunned the attacking Indians and they broke, giving still more time for the whites to get closer to the defenses. By the time the Indians had again reorganized themselves sufficiently to continue the attack, the stagecoach and the detail were within gunshot range of the defending forces who let up mighty cheers and opened fire to cover the approaching party.

The Indians were infuriated to think how they had been tricked, and they renewed their concerted attacks upon the fort. Fire arrows were effectively used to keep the troops busy controlling blazes on or about anything that might burn. All ranches for miles around were either destroyed or under full siege. Miles upon miles of telegraph lines and poles were destroyed. After several days of such warfare the

Indians tired of their activity and slowly withdrew across the South Platte River northward and westward up Lodgepole Creek driving hundreds of stolen cattle and horses ahead of them, shouting and singing as they trekked further west.

The small group of defenders, many who had been wounded, were near exhaustion from the long, endless hours of tense vigil and heavy fighting repulsing the charges of hundreds of screaming warriors. The watchful waiting for silent stealthy sneak attacks at unexpected places or times had also been most trying. For some time after the attacking forces had left the area, the troops moved with great caution in the repair of the fort and telegraph lines. Many must have said a silent prayer of thanks just to be alive.¹³

In April of the year '65, news was flashed over the telegraph wires causing elation among all those stationed at Fort Cottonwood. Richmond had fallen and Lee had surrendered at Appomattox. The long war was ended. The joy was short lived, however, for close on the heels of those welcome tidings came the stunning message that Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated. As all over the nation, sorrow swept this lonely frontier post.

Though the cessation of hostilities between the North and South meant the return to civilian life for many of the troops in the East, to the trooper on the frontier it brought no such joys of release or discharge. He must continue to ride those endless miles, day after day—rain or shine—fair weather or blizzard. His Indian foe was crafty and followed no manual of military procedure or tactics. Loneliness and privation were often his daily companions. Amidst all of this bloodshed and danger, it seems that military orders got mixed up (snafu) even as they have in wars since that date. It is difficult to understand how anyone would order or permit troops to move across those Indian-infested plains without proper arms. A brief dispatch under the dateline May 20, 1865, tells all too well the tragedy that occurred some miles east of Fort Cottonwood.

Brigadier-General Mitchell, Fort Leavenworth:	Headquarters Department of the Missouri, May 20, 1865—10:15 a.m.
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Colonel Livingston reports that a detachment of Third U. S. Volunteers, with their train, was captured and killed by Indians between Elm Creek and Blue Station. The men were without arms. They should not be sent out unarmed. Who sent them that way?

G. M. DODGE
Major-General¹⁴

The available records do not disclose the answer or who committed this thoughtless blunder.

Fort Cottonwood was a busy center of activities in these many stirring events. Troopers were moved from the Fort to various other posts along the line in the struggle to keep the trails open, the telegraph communication lines intact, and the emigrant and supply trains moving along with the stagecoaches and the mail. The reverberations of the Civil War were still being felt along the frontier. An interesting report by Major Geo. O'Brien gives the location and spacing of stage stations and those served by Fort Cottonwood as base of operations.

Headquarters
Post Cottonwood, Nebr. Ter.,
June 10, 1865.

Capt. George F. Price,
Acting Assistant Adjutant-General,
Julesburg, Colo. Ter.:

Captain: I have the honor to enclose a table of stage stations and distances between them from Fort Kearny, Nebr. Ter., to Julesburg, Colo. Ter. The stations designated by red ink [asterisk (*)] are garrisoned by troops from this post.

I am, captain, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. M. O'BRIEN,
Major, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, Commanding Post.

[Enclosure]

List of stage stations between Fort Kearny, Nebr. Ter.,
and Julesburg, Colo. Ter., with distances
between each station.

Fort Kearny Station to Craig's Station, 10 miles;
Craig's Station to Platte Station, 10 miles;
Platte Station to Plum Creek Station, 15 miles;
Plum Creek Station to Willow Island Station, 15 miles;
Willow Island Station to Midway Station,* 10 miles;
Midway Station to Dan Smith's Station,* 10 miles;
Dan Smith's Station to Gilman's Station,* 10 miles;
Gilman's Station to Dan Trout's Station,* 12 miles;
Dan Trout's Station to Post Cottonwood,* 4 miles;
Post Cottonwood to Box Elder Station,* 3 miles;
Box Elder Station to Jack Morrow's Station,* 10 miles;
Jack Morrow's Station to Bishops' Station,* 10 miles;
Bishop's Station to Fremont's Springs Station,* 10 miles;
Fremont's Springs Station to O'Fallon's Bluffs Station,* 2 miles;

O'Fallon's Bluffs Station to Elkhorn Station,* 10 miles;
Elkhorn Station to Alkali Station,* 15 miles;
Alkali Station to Sand Hill Station, 10 miles;
Sand Hill Station to Diamond Springs Station, 10 miles;
Diamond Springs Station to Elbow Station, 10 miles;
Elbow Station to Butte Station, 10 miles;
Butte Station to Julesburg Station, 10 miles;

GEO. M. O'BRIEN

Major, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, Commanding Post.¹⁵

The remainder of the year 1865 was spent with long, hard hours in the saddle going on expeditions to the Republican River, to the Loup Forks, the Niobrara, guarding stage stations, and escorting coaches. Haymaking and wood and timber cutting in the canyons had to be discontinued because of constant Indian troubles.¹⁶

PART III

THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR

January 20, 1866, the monthly purport of Fort Cottonwood set forth the order that henceforth the establishment would be known as Fort McPherson. This was further confirmed by General Order No. 19, Department of the Missouri, dated February 26, 1866.¹ The change of name was to honor Major-General James B. McPherson who had been killed in action July 22, 1864, while commanding the Army of the Tennessee in the battle for Atlanta. General McPherson was highly regarded by his troops and by the higher command.² (See Appendix A.) In the years that followed though, the title of Fort Cottonwood still was used among many of the old timers.

The War between the States had left its deep scars. There was a slowing down for a time in the Indian depredations and attacks along the Platte River and the mighty trails that followed both its banks. The Second Powder River Expedition, under command of Colonel Henry B. Carrington with Jim Bridger, the famous mountain man, trapper and Indian scout, as chief of scouts, after equipping at Fort Kearny, left that post May 18, 1866. The expedition consisted of 260 troops and 226 mule teams and wagons. This caravan arrived at Fort McPherson May 24th and secured more ammunition and a saw mill that was idle at the Post which were needed to erect and protect new forts to be constructed farther west.

This expedition had orders to establish and supply necessary protective forts, namely Fort Reno, Fort Phil Kearny and Fort C. F. Smith, along the new route known as the Bozeman Trail, north from Fort Laramie to the rich mines in the Montana Territory. In this endeavor much blood was to be spilled within a short period.^{3,4}

No doubt everything should have been "spit and polish" about McPherson when Lieutenant-General W. T. Sherman and staff visited at the post in August en route on an inspection tour of the conditions in the Rocky Mountain area. The Post Returns show the arrival of the Commanding General, and all who have been in the service know only too well what it means to have "top brass" come aboard.⁵

The massive uprising of the many tribes in '64 and '65 had cooled down some. With this slowing of Indian activities, there came a let-

down in the tension. The routine around the military post began to lose its excitement thus causing restlessness among the troops. Discipline was tightened to cope with the situation, with results reflected in the Post Returns. The absent list for September, 1866, discloses the following:

Absent:

1st Lt. James Cahill, at Washington, D. C., since August 1st. A.W.O.L.

1st Lt. Cahill, from A.W.O.L. to absent sick.

Sept. 5th, Lt. Adams, 2nd U. S. Cav. V. and 28 enlisted men absent on D.S. at the projected crossing of the U.P.R.R.

Private Caine, Co. B., 2nd U. S. Cav. from A.W.O.L. to desertion.

Corp. McKinney & Pvt. McCaulley, Co. A., deserted.

Privates O'Neill & Warnell, Co. A., deserted.

Privates Andrews, Flanagan, O'Sullivan, Nixon and Smith, deserted.

Privates Ramsey & Littleton, Co. C., deserted.

Private Warnell from desertion to present in confinement.

Sgt. Brown & Pvts. Brown & Sawdmyer, deserted.

Pvt. Hester, Co. A., deserted.

Sept. 30th — Lt. Cahill from absent sick to A.W.O.L.⁶

Many Southerners of the Confederate Army who had been captured in the East during the course of the War Between the States had been given the opportunity to join up and fight Indians instead of being confined in Northern prisons. There were some who accepted this alternative and were known as "galvanized" or "white-washed" Yanks. This policy had been adopted by the Northern forces because of the lack of manpower. The steady drain upon available men in the Union Army due to the heavy casualties resulting from wounds and disease created an urgent need for more men, especially in the West for frontier fighting. After any war there is always a great surge to get out of the service and go home. Seeing many troops discharged and detached and being faced with hour upon hour of duties of many kinds, including stable duty, and along with tedious, uneventful hours in the saddle in the biting cold or stifling heat caused some to "go over the hill."

Also, with the cessation of hostilities in 1865, there was a loud clamor from the Northern states to disband the army and cut all Congressional budgets to the bone. The war was over, the Union was saved, there could be no need for maintaining the military services except at an absolute minimum. In this demand for cutting the mili-

tary forces, the political leaders lost sight of the struggle of life and death in the West. It is difficult to believe that so few troops (approximately 1200) were assigned to the overwhelming task of securing the Great Plains area, but the following excerpt bears witness:

In 1866, General Philip St. George Cooke was commanding the Military Department of the Platte, (embracing this territory) extending from Omaha to Salt Lake City and northwest almost to the Canadian line. His forces were limited to the Second Regiment of Cavalry and two-thirds of the 18th U. S. Infantry posted at accepted strategic points of those days, Fort Laramie, Wyoming and Fort McPherson, Nebraska.⁷

The first news of the Fetterman massacre reached Fort Laramie Christmas eve December 24, 1866, when John (Portuguese) Phillips staggered from his horse after a ride of 236 miles in subzero weather. Upon receipt of this information it was telegraphed to General Philip St. George Cooke, Commanding Department of the Platte. Cooke immediately sent a dispatch relieving Colonel Carrington of command ordering him to Fort Casper. Soon thereafter Carrington was transferred to Fort McPherson.^{7a}

The day after Christmas the news of the disastrous event at Fort Phil Kearny, the Fetterman massacre, came in over the telegraph line. This started rumors and caused general alarm throughout the entire area.

On the same day, one Captain Arthur MacArthur, later a ranking general, was shown on the "morning report" by transfer from Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory, to Fort McPherson for duty.⁸

The progress in the winning of the West moved forward another step when on March 1, 1867, President Andrew Johnson declared Nebraska a state. The official reports, correspondence and orders no longer carried the abbreviation "N.T." (Nebraska Territory). Another star had been added to our flag.

The winter months from the latter part of December, 1866, through to March, 1867, were harsh, with subzero weather and much snow. These conditions were such that the various tribes were forced to await spring before engaging in any further resistance.

On March 4th of that year, the morning report shows that Colonel Henry B. Carrington, 18th U. S. Infantry, arrived and assumed command.⁹ The Colonel was soon to be involved in a hearing before a special commission held at Fort McPherson to investigate his part in the tragic events at Fort Phil Kearny, Dakota Territory, when on December 21, 1866, a part of the command was led into an ambush

near the Fort and the detachment consisting of about 80 officers and men under command of Brvt.-Col., Captain W. J. Fetterman were all killed.

When word of the Fetterman disaster reached Washington there was a general demand that the entire affair be investigated. The Senate wanted an explanation of what had happened and who was responsible. To relieve the tension caused by this shocking news of the disaster President Andrew Johnson appointed a special commission to gather all the facts. Those named to serve on this investigative commission were Generals Alfred Sully, J. B. Sanborn, N. B. Buford and Colonel E. S. Parker, along with two civilians, G. P. Beauvais, a long time fur trader, and J. T. Kinney, former sutler at Fort Phil Kearny. This commission arrived at Fort McPherson March 19, 1867. The hearings were held with the many available witnesses including Colonel Carrington testifying as to their knowledge of the facts of the preceding events. The hearings were concluded at Fort McPherson on April 17, 1867, and the Commission moved farther west to continue taking of evidence.

Though Colonel Carrington was exonerated by the commission's report issued on July 8th, this fact was lost in the clamoring of those who were unfriendly to clearing Carrington.^{9a}

As among many troops, the care of equipment at McPherson was a problem. To encourage all soldiers to care for their gear and weapons, an order was issued under the date of April 23, 1867, notifying enlisted men that if they lost their Spencer Carbine through carelessness, they would be charged \$100.00. If they lost their Colt revolver, the cost would be \$150.00.¹⁰ In light of the wage scale of the average trooper of that day which was \$16.00 per month or 50 cents per day, this penalty was very heavy.

The regular routine of the Fort was enlivened on June 10, 1867, by the arrival of the Seventh U. S. Cavalry under command of Lieutenant-Colonel and Bvt. Major-General George A. Custer, who was, within less than a decade, to receive immortal fame in his last stand on the Little Big Horn. The Seventh Cavalry was on an expedition up from the south in search of Indians. After resting and acquiring fresh supplies, they moved out on June 15th to continue their duty assignment, returning to their assigned field of operations in the Kansas area.¹¹

Within less than a month after leaving Fort McPherson with his command as per orders, at a point some miles southwest of the Fort

General Custer was to become involved in a series of events that would lead to his being tried before a General Court Martial. Custer was charged with ordering three soldiers in his command to be shot as deserters without trial, later absenting himself from his command without leave (to visit his wife 275 miles away), use of government property for his own personal use, neglect to relieve small detachment of his troops when under attack nor to bury or recover bodies of troops killed. For this he was found guilty and sentenced "to be suspended from rank and command for one year and forfeit his pay proper for the same time." Special Order No. 426 Headquarters of Army, A.G.O. Washington, August 27, 1867, in the case of *United States vs. Bvt. Maj. Gen. G. A. Custer, Lt. Col. 7th U. S. Cavalry*.^{11a}

Lt. General William T. Sherman, Commanding General of all western troops, writing to the Secretary of War from Fort McPherson on June 17, 1867, doubted the belief of General J. B. Sanborn, one of the six commissioners appointed in February of that year to investigate Indian conditions, that peace could be brought about with the warring tribes. Sherman said, "My opinion is that if 50 Indians are allowed to remain between the Arkansas and the Platte, we will have to guard every stage station, every train, and all railroad working parties. In other words, 50 hostile Indians will checkmate three thousand soldiers. Rather get them out as soon as possible, and it makes little difference whether they be coaxed out by Indian Commissioners or killed." This gives some insight into the thinking and attitude of the high command in handling this situation. Treaties were being made to gain an advantage and then broken by the white men.

General Sully, also one of the commissioners, wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 22, 1867, stating that a large number of Indians west of the Missouri River were still hostile. He also stated, "It is as hard for an ignorant, wild Indian as it is for an educated, cultivated white man to remain quietly at home starving to death, having no means of hunting, being obliged to kill his horses to keep himself and children alive, and at the same time not allowed to purchase arms and ammunition to kill small game; while he is visited daily by Indians from the hostile camp trying to induce him to join them and sees by their warring with impunity on the whites, they have more horses and mules than they want and plenty to eat and procure all the arms and ammunition they want."¹²

During the spring of '67 the tribes were restless. The situation was conveyed to the area command by Col. Carrington by telegram:

Maj. Genl. C. C. Augur
Comdg. Dept., Omaha

Head Qrs. Fort McPherson, Neb.
May 17th 1867

The Indians represented by *Spotted Tail*, *Standing Elk* and others now here number all told about eight hundred, and are moving down to Platte Bridge Vicinity...

Henry B. Carrington
Col. 18th U. S. Infantry
Brvt. Brig. Genl. U. S. A.

Not all army conditions were harsh. To show the troops that their government could be generous at times, an order dated June 24, 1867, stated—from that date, the “ration of hard bread increased from 12 ounces to 16 ounces.”¹³ One who has never had to eat this delicacy would not appreciate the import of the order.

There is from time to time in the annals of the history of the West, incidents that accentuate the plight of the Indian. Most of the information records the assaults by the redman upon his white brother, but a message from Commissioner Sanborn shortly after leaving Fort McPherson brings into focus the fact that the tables could be turned.

Maj. Gen. C. C. Augur
Comdg. Dep't of Platte, Omaha

Fort Laramie
June 4, 1867

Is there any danger of citizens of North Platte City attacking Spotted Tail Indians? There is such a rumor. Should there be, would it not be well for you to issue a general order designating the boundaries of country wherein the friendly Indians can remain undisturbed and the whites prohibited from going? We dislike to move the Indians again.

John B. Sanborn
President Special Indian Commission

PART IV

COMING OF THE IRON MONSTER

The Civil War, as it progressed through the years 1861-1865, had made apparent the highly important need of rail transportation to the West Coast. On July 1, 1862, President Lincoln had signed the Enabling Act, which provided for the building of such a railroad. National defense rather than trade was the motivating force in securing its passage by the Congress. The broad expanse of the Platte Valley was selected as the best route to follow westward.

It wasn't until July 10, 1865, that the first rail was laid at Omaha, N. T., and then only 20 miles were completed before winter set in and work stopped. In the year 1866, 260 miles were added. In 1867, 240 miles more were completed.¹

It was not until the rails began to protrude westward from Grand Island, N. T., that the Indians began to realize the real significance of this new encroachment by the whites. Up until then they had heard rumors and had been told strange tales by members of their tribes who had ventured eastward and viewed white man's medicine. It took the full impact of the actual steel rail and the fire breathing engines to awaken the many tribes.

During the year of 1867, the ribbon of steel was moving from east to west over the plains in its surge across the continent to join the West with the East. The tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad, with the smoking and belching monsters creaking and wheezing along, were causing great disturbances and apprehension among the Indians all along the right-of-way. This lengthening shadow forewarned the older chieftains of their doom. The younger warriors refused to heed the counsel of their elders; they were bent on stopping and destroying this new enemy, no matter the cost. Attacks on working crews, surveying parties, and all whites within striking distance started again. The West burst into flame anew. Fort McPherson was busy furnishing guard details up and down the line. The purport for July 21, 1867, sets forth the order that Company B, Second Cavalry, would escort General G. M. Dodge, Chief Engineer in charge of construction of the Union Pacific Railroad, to Salt Lake City and back to Fort McPherson.

The determination of the Indians to stop the expansion and extension of the railroad took on a more effective and serious mode of operations. On August 6, 1867, a band of Cheyennes under Chief Turkey Leg succeeded in wrecking a train at a point about three miles west of Plum Creek. Engineer W. F. Murphy's graphic account tells it well:

There were plenty of Indians around. I first saw some of their devilment in the spring of 1867. There were five or six section men along the tracks near Lone Tree (now Central City, Nebraska), stark naked and all scalped. They had been killed by Sioux; this was east of Grand Island about fifteen miles. The next massacre I saw was at Plum Creek on August 6th, I think. We were called for the train that was wrecked but the engineer and I were too tired to go. We had made a very long trip from the front to Omaha and back to Grand Island on account of a washout. R. J. Wyman was General Foreman at Grand Island and he agreed to run around. "Bully" Brooks, from the C. B. & Q. at Aurora, Illinois, was anxious to make money and Wyman induced him to go as the train was an important one. About midnight we got an alarm that the Indians were raiding Plum Creek Station.

We found out later they had piled some track ties on a one span bridge a few miles west of there and pried the ends of the rails out of the joints. They cut the telegraph wire to fasten the ties to the bridge every which way. The engineer, "Bully" Brooks (his name in the states was Bowers), was running engine number fifty-three, a Dick and Norris type. There were only two on the Union Pacific. Of course he saw nothing of the Indians or the obstruction until he was into it. The Indians shot him and the fireman and they burned up in the cars that were piled upon the engine, two flat cars and three box cars. The Indians burst open the other cars and had a big time with the plunder. The conductor, Billy Kinney, and the brakeman got away and reported the affair from Plum Creek. Nichols was the operator.

A relief train was sent out from Grand Island, Hank Makely the foreman in charge. I went along with the others. We had all the needle guns we could get and some Spencer Carbines. All classes of employees volunteered. George Duncan, a passenger conductor, and the agent were there, I remember. Some only had pitch forks and old cavalry sabers. When we got to the wreck in the forenoon, the Indians were still there. We got pretty close to them before they showed any inclination to pull off. In the train there were several cars of merchandise such as dry goods and clothing, boots and shoes, hardware and groceries. The Indians had gotten into this and burst open the boxes. Plunder was scattered all over the prairie for half a mile. It looked as if a big cyclone had picked up a general merchandise store somewhere and sifted its contents over half the country. They cut the feet off the boots, threw them away and wore the legs. They cut the tops out of hats and the seats out of trousers and cut the arms off of coats. They wanted plenty of ventilation. They had tied the ends of a bolt of cloth to a horse's tail and rode around with it streaming behind them. When we arrived at the wreck they drew off to the edge of the hills, apparently in no hurry to go and made signs to us to come out and fight. We knew the soldiers were coming shortly from Fort McPherson fifty miles away.

They got word to them by the government telegraph across the river. When the soldiers came they first made a good camp and the Indians got away that night.²

Today the trains and motorists speed by this historic spot, now designated by a small marker located about three miles west of Lexington, Nebraska, between U. S. Highway No. 30 and the Union Pacific Railroad mainline tracks to the south. Few pause to reflect upon these stirring events.

Though there were continuous raids and attacks at many points, still Indians often came into the forts on occasion. On September 21, 1867, Chiefs Spotted Tail, Turkey Foot, and other chiefs came into Fort McPherson. The record states that they were given ten suits of clothing by order of the Department Commander, and left the Fort the same day.³ This policy had been adopted in hope that it would aid in pacifying the warring tribes. Time proved its futility.

The quiet and tranquility of the Fort and surrounding territory was broken with great fear and alarm on October 2, 1867. It was reported that a "huge party of Sioux Indians" were approaching the Fort. They passed on up the river without incident, apparently being a large tribe off on its fall buffalo hunt to lay in a supply of meat and many fresh buffalo robes for the coming winter.⁴

Calm again reigned at Fort McPherson, and life moved on. George Bird Grinnell describes one of the diversions of that day:

It was while the Pawnees were there that a number of well known capitalists and other interested in the Union Pacific Railroad, then just being built, came out to see the country, around McPherson. None of them knew anything about the West, but each one wished to kill a buffalo. They were taken in charge by Major North and his brother, and with their Pawnees went south toward the Republican River. Among these men were Sidney Dillon, Oakes Ames, Thomas A. Durant, C. S. Bushnell, George Francis Train and others whose names are forgotten. Ambulances were taken along for them to ride in until buffalo were found, when they were to be provided with saddle horses.

Fifteen miles from Fort McPherson they found a band of about one hundred buffalo and Mr. Dillon, Mr. Durant and Mr. Train mounted their horses to join the chase. The rest of the party stayed in the ambulance and watched the fun. Luther North had picked out a good reliable buffalo horse for Mr. Dillon, had explained to him as well as he could what he ought to do, and given him his own revolver. They came as near to the herd as they could without frightening them. Frank North gave the word and the chase was on. The ground was dry and by the time the buffalo were overtaken, the air was so filled with clouds of dust that it was hard to see a buffalo until one was within a few feet of it. Luther North's horse was a very fast one and he overtook the buffalo before anyone else had tried to cut one out and get it away from the dust to a place where the people in the ambulance might have a good view of it. Just as he succeeded in getting a fine three-year-old heifer out to

the edge of the herd, his horse stepped in a hole and fell, and Luther North was left on foot. About this time, Mr. Dillon went past. He was not a very good horseman and had perhaps lost his stirrups at the first jump and when he went by Luther he was holding on to the pommel with one hand and in the other was the revolver sticking straight out to the right and the bridle reins were flapping on the pony's neck. It was doing its best to overtake the buffalo, but like Luther North's horse, it found a hole and went down and Mr. Dillon was badly bruised, but no bones were broken. The men caught the horses after a long chase.

In the meantime the herd scattered and the Indians succeeded in getting a couple of old bulls back near the ambulance where an Indian killed one with bow and arrow. He shot him with two arrows; the first one was driven in up to the feathers, and the second clear through the body and dropped out on the opposite side. Mr. Durant killed one buffalo and the scouts killed a number.

These strangers were then given every opportunity to hunt, with comparative safety, under the protection of the Pawnee scouts. After they had killed all the buffaloes they desired, some of them expressed a wish to see some hostile Sioux and if possible, to witness a fight with them. As it turned out, their wishes were gratified.⁵

According to some authorities of Western history, the abundance of buffalo was still so great in the fall of '67 that precautions were taken about hunting them near forts. Mari Sandoz in *The Buffalo Hunters* narrates:

To prevent the over-eager defenders of the colors from cluttering up the area with stinking carcasses, orders were still issued at posts like Fort McPherson, Nebraska, against shooting buffaloes on the parade ground. Also that when Sir W. F. Butler regretted that his party had shot more than thirty bulls in a hunt at Fort McPherson below the forks of the Platte, Col. R. I. Dodge told him "Kill every buffalo you can. Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone."⁶

The winter months of 1867-1868 were more or less quiet, with troops performing regular garrison duties, drills and policing the area. The condition was changed with the advance of spring. During the month of April, 1868, there were several raids by hostile Indians. Six citizens were reported killed in the vicinity of the Fort in these attacks, and considerable livestock was lost.⁷

Before the last snows were gone in the spring of '68, James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok, who had already left his mark earlier in Nebraska with the ruthless McCanles murder down near where Fairbury now is, rode into Fort McPherson with a message from Fort Hays, Kansas. Wild Bill stayed in the area for some time scouting for troops and plying the trade of a professional buffalo hunter. Later, he drifted back into his old stomping grounds in Kansas.⁸

Indians again began to appear all along the right of way of the Union Pacific, which by this time had reached far west of the Fort.



TRACK LAYERS AT WORK

Photograph taken during building of the Union Pacific Railway, 1866

On May 2, 1868, Company B, Second Cavalry, was ordered by Department Headquarters to go on patrol duty between the new railroad station called North Platte and Grand Island station. May 16th, Company C, Second Cavalry, relieved Company B and assumed the patrol duties. During these months of spring and summer, the large majority of troops were continuously coming and going on patrol duties along the Union Pacific Railroad, duty on the Little Blue River in the southeast and expeditions on the Republican River.⁹

Cleanliness was a virtue in the military of those rough and ready days. The present day armed forces with its large mobile laundry units have to be assured of electric power and a large staff of mechanics to service the machines—while in the “old days” all that was needed, by way of equipment, was a tub and a washboard with *strong* lye soap. The government furnished the rest, as the Army General Order for August, 1868, bears witness: “One laundress will be allowed for each 19 enlisted men present.”¹⁰

The army of those times seems to have delighted in administering military discipline upon the lowly private. The official purport for October of that year states, in very brief form, “Twenty-seven men, all privates, in Post Guardhouse.”¹¹ One would think that out of such a large group being held in the “brig,” at least one or two would be a two-striper, but apparently the infractions of regulations and orders were reserved for the lowest rank in the chain of command.

On November 1, 1868, an alert put Companies C and D, Second Cavalry, in the saddle. The orders were to pursue Indians who had torn up tracks near Ogallala Station. Company C, Second Cavalry, left the Fort on November 10th, going west to Ogallala and north to Ash Hollow and back to the Fort. November 10th, Company I, Second Cavalry, was ordered to Willow Island to relieve Pawnee scouts on guard duty.¹²

During the same month an unique incident occurred—when a high-ranking officer was, and is, reprimanded in the military, that was, and is, news. The Army General Order for that month disclosed that “the pay of General Adams was stopped on account of deficiency at Fort McPherson.”¹³ Nothing more is given in the record about this matter.

The military, of the higher command in Washington, in December directed that all Cavalry Companies be equipped with the Sharps Carbine, and that the Spencer rifles be turned in.¹⁴ This meant that the troops would then be armed with single-shot, breech-loading weapons instead of seven-shot Spencer rifles which had proved so

important. In fact, as late as September 18, 1868, the fire power and effectiveness of the Spencer rifle had written one of the greatest pages in western history in the Battle of Beecher Island which was fought on the Arickaree Branch of the Republican River south and west of Fort McPherson.¹⁵ In that fight Colonel Forsyth and fifty scouts, armed with Spencer rifles and Colt 1860 army revolvers, entrenched on a small sand island in the middle of the shallow stream, withstood the combined attacks of Chief Roman Nose and several hundred mounted warriors. After the famous Chief Roman Nose was killed in one of the charges, the others were not so daring. The Indians had then settled down to starve out the defenders by a siege lasting seven days. Two scouts had been able to slip out under cover of darkness and had brought troops from Fort Wallace about 100 miles south and east in Kansas,^{16, 17} the point of origin of the expedition.

This changing to a single-shot weapon was to stay with the armed forces for many years and prove to be a hindrance and serious detriment. Later events were to prove this conclusively in blood and tears.^{18, 19} Even today the military clings to various and sundry weapons that are antiquated by newer and better inventions.

February 11, 1869, Major H. E. Noyes, Commanding Officer, Second Cavalry, was ordered by Department Headquarters to take four companies of cavalry, with Company A, Pawnee scouts, and proceed at once to the forks of the Republican River in pursuit of hostile Indians. The weather turned bitterly cold, causing great suffering among the troops. More than 50 horses and mules were frozen to death. After two fruitless weeks in the field, the command returned to Fort McPherson. A large number of men had frozen hands and feet. Some cases were so serious that the frozen parts had to be amputated. The Pawnee scouts were able to weather the storm without being frozen, and to make matters worse, they had had no food for the last two days on the return march to the Fort.^{20, 21, 22}

On May 10, 1869, the lonely telegraph wire that came in from the distant west and faded into the eastern horizon, tapped a message that caused a big stir at Fort McPherson as it did throughout the rest of the nation.

Promontory Point, Utah

May 10th

The last rail is laid! The last spike is driven! The Union Pacific Railroad is completed! The point of junction is 1,086 miles west of the Missouri River, and 690 east of Sacramento City.

Leland Stanford

Central Pacific Railroad

T. C. Durant

Sidney Dillon

John Duff

Union Pacific Railroad.²³

In the territory from Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie, the resistance of the Indian tribes to the building of the railroad had been continuous with never a moment's let-up. Fort McPherson was the hub of much of the military activities in furnishing patrols and scouting parties to assure twenty-four hour protection to the graders, the workers laying steel, and the bridge gangs. General Dodge, in his book *How We Built the Union Pacific Railroad* stated "that it was a fight for every foot, with about half guarding and fighting, while the other half worked."²⁴

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PART V

CREATION OF A FRONTIER HERO

On May 20, 1869, the Fifth U. S. Cavalry, under command of Brvt. Maj. Gen. E. A. Carr, with a large wagon train, arrived at Fort McPherson from what is now Kansas, then Colorado Territory, to assume command. One of the guides was a young scout, William F. Cody. Fort McPherson was to see a great deal of this young man for some time as a regular civilian scout attached to the command. On June 9th, General Carr, as per orders, led an expedition south. The field force consisted of Companies A, B, C, E, G, I, L, and M, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, with the Pawnee scouts attached. Cody was named as one of the guides. The Quartermaster's order for this expedition is the earliest available document which refers to Cody in connection with Fort McPherson. It reads:

Headquarters Department of the Platte
Chief Quartermaster's Office
Omaha, Nebraska, June 2, 1869

Lieut. F. C. Grugan, 2nd Cavalry
Acting Asst. Quartermaster
Fort McPherson, Nebraska

Sir:

Bvt. Maj. Gen'l E. A. Carr, 5th Cavalry, having applied for transportation for the expedition ordered from Fort McPherson, you are respectfully instructed to transfer to the Quartermaster of the expedition for the Republican under General Carr thirty 30 pack mules equipped, five 5 packers mounted, material for hoppers and forage sacks, with two civilian scouts, William Cody and Garry.

You will make requisition for any material needed in equipping the expedition without delay; and report your action to this office.

Very respectfully,

Your obt. servant.

WM Myers

Bvt. Brig. General

Chief Quartermaster¹

During this expedition led by General Carr, one of the most decisive defeats was administered to the Indians. The record at Fort McPherson sets forth the following:

The troops under command of Bvt. Brig. Gen. Carr, which left this Post June 9th, '69, struck the Republican River near the river westward. Scouting parties were sent in every direction, several attempts were made by the Indians to run off

stock, but they were always on the alert, and succeeded in severely chastising them. General Carr, through great exertions, marched his command over swollen streams and heavy sandhills for nearly 300 miles and succeeded in surprising at Summit Springs, a village of Dog Cheyennes (notoriously the worst band of Indians on the plains) numbering 84 lodges. General Carr caused the complete destruction of the village—274 horses, 144 mules, 10,000 pounds of dried meat, 22 revolvers, 56 rifles, 40 bows and arrows, 50 pounds of powder, together with hundreds of buffalo robes, cooking utensils, etc. were captured. Two white women, Mrs. Weichel and Mrs. Alderice, were recaptured from the Indians, though not in time to prevent them from killing the latter and wounding the former. Fifty-two Indians were slain, and 15 Indian women and children taken prisoners. This is a greater punishment than has been inflicted upon the Indians for a number of years.^{2, 3}

This battle at Summit Springs, just over the line in Colorado Territory, was such a victory that the Nebraska Legislature, by official Resolution, voted thanks to General E. A. Carr, Major Frank North, and Pawnee scouts.⁴ (See Appendix "E")

Meanwhile, full pressure was being applied by the military to force the various tribes moving about south of the Platte River to evacuate that area. August 2, 1869, under Brvt. Col. Maj. Fifth Cavalry William B. Royall's command, an expedition consisting of five companies of the U. S. Fifth Cavalry and three companies of Pawnee scouts left for the Republican River Valley.

It returned to Fort McPherson August 21st. Another still larger force, consisting of five companies, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, and two companies, Second U. S. Cavalry, with two companies Pawnee scouts attached, under leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, left the post on September 15th. Indians scattered before these troops could make a concentrated attack. This was an old Indian trick, to disperse and leave many trails, thus foiling the military maneuvers of the army in pursuit.⁵

In the summer of 1869 a colorful personage, whose facile pen was to bring fame and fortune to an unknown young frontier scout and make every red-blooded American boy dream of the Wild West, arrived on the scene at Fort McPherson. Probably there is no better description of this event than that by Richard J. Walsh in his book *The Making of Buffalo Bill*:

Ned Buntline, prodigious dime novelist, wiped his pen clean of the blood and brine of his sea tales and fared forth to the plains. Under contract to write a new series, he well knew the appetites of his youthful customers. He meant to feed them an actual living Indian fighter.

Arriving at Fort McPherson a short time after the battle of Summit Springs, Buntline went first to Major Frank North, whose reputation had reached his ears.

He saw in the white chief of the Pawnees, rich, raw material for the dime novel. But North was diffident. He pooh-poohed the proposal. He couldn't see himself as a paper hero and would not lend his name to fiction.

If you want a man to fill that bill, he said, he's over there under the wagon.

Buntline went and poked under the wagon and woke up Bill Cody. The twenty-three year old scout rolled over, rubbed his eyes and looked up at the man who was to make him famous as Buffalo Bill.* * * *

During the time he spent at Fort McPherson and Fort Sedgwick, gathering facts and fiction and impressions for his stories, Cody let him ride Powder Face. When he went home to write, Buntline did not forget Powder Face.* * * *

When the scouting ended in October, Cody found himself stranded at Fort McPherson with no occupation and no income. Racing his horses provided him with both. Powder Face proved to be one of the swiftest ponies I ever saw and Tall Bull the fastest running horse west of the Mississippi River.* * * *

Winning more money by racing in this fashion, the young scout, who was one day to lead the Congress of Rough Riders of the World, tasted the joys of applause and found them sweet. Altogether Fort McPherson was, he decided, a lively and pleasant post. In the center of country alive with game and now peaceful, it seemed a good place to settle down.

He built a small cabin, one of a circle of six outside the stockade, and wrote to his family that there was a home ready for them. Early in the spring, his wife and daughter came from Topeka, where they had been living during the winter, after a year in St. Louis, and his two sisters came on from Leavenworth.⁶

This interpretation of the events surrounding Cody and Ned Buntline by Walsh, in his book, are thoroughly questioned by Don Russell in his fine book entitled *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* (pp. 149-162). The title Buffalo Bill had been bestowed upon Cody earlier in 1867 and 1868 when he was under contract to deliver buffalo meat for the construction workers employed in the building of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. The right to the title was further strengthened when Cody out shot William Comstock in the buffalo shoot held near Monument, Kansas.⁷

Cody loved this countryside around McPherson so well that he later made his home in the nearby community of North Platte where it remained for many years. Though fame and fortune came his way, with many of the crowned heads of Europe listed among his friends, he still called the plains and prairies near the confluence of the North and South Platte Rivers home. A large ranch near the North Platte River, with its abundance of grass and feed was established and known as "Scouts Rest."

In the early summer of 1869 a civilian scout named John B. Omohundro and known as "Texas Jack" came on the scene at Cottonwood Springs, as a trail driver with a herd of Texas longhorns from down

Texas way. He was a Virginian and had been a member of the Confederate Cavalry, and one of the many who had headed Westward at the close of the War Between the States, in search of fame and fortune. A close bond of friendship was to spring between this southerner and Cody. They worked on the plains together as scouts and guides, then for several years as actors on Eastern theater stages in breath-taking Western thrillers.⁸

In October Companies F and H, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, were alerted and hit the trail south with Cody as scout. Word had been received that a surveying party of twelve men, under direction of a man named Nelson Buck, had been wiped out by the Indians down on Beaver Creek about sixteen miles up from where it empties into the Republican. When the troops arrived, they found surveying instruments and flags, an ambulance belonging to the survey crew, a blood-spattered carbine, and three dead Indians. Upon the body of one of the Indians was found a letter addressed to one of the survey crew from his sister. Though a thorough search was made, no bodies of the surveying party could be found.⁹ Buck had been at Fort McPherson earlier, on July 21, 1869, in an attempt to secure suitable firearms with which to protect the group.¹⁰

An Ogallala Sioux, Chief Pawnee Killer, is alleged to have, sometime later, told about being near at hand at the time of the incident; that the whites had killed one of his braves, and that the young warriors could not be restrained and retaliated by killing the whites.¹¹

As 1870 opened, things were quiet generally along the frontier and around Fort McPherson, which is disclosed by the following entry in the medical report for January, 1870:

Several hunting parties consisting of a few officers and enlisted men, numbering in all about 30, left the post at intervals during the month for the Republican River country in search of buffalo. They were well provided with rations, and in each instance had a number of Army wagons accompanying them. They were very successful and returned to the Post well supplied with meat. One of the parties killed in the neighborhood of 100 buffalo and 20 elk. In consequence of these parties being so successful, there was but little beef used at the post, buffalo meat constituting almost entirely the principal meat ration of the garrison.¹²

In April of that year, an incident occurred which showed that some civil law and order was getting a foothold in the West. The official purport relates that Deputy U. S. Marshal Leonard arrived at the post to take a citizen named Clark to Omaha, Nebraska, on a warrant charging him with horse stealing.¹³ There were other means known and often used to dispose of such infractions of the law. Even several

years later, the "taking of law into their own hands" was still common practice among the cattlemen who ruled the range for a period. Times were perilous in the West and in the new settlement of North Platte located a few miles west of the Fort. William Lee Parke, who as a boy in 1870 lived there at the time, later becoming an official of the Union Pacific Railroad, has this to say:

There were many front street saloons and gambling dens; one or two dance halls were running almost every night and holdups occurred with frequently a murder. An organization of citizens was effected to clean up the town.

Three of the outlaws were captured in an old dugout on the river bank. They were formally tried for committing highway robbery the night before, beating their victim into insensibility with their revolvers and laying him on the railroad track. He had consciousness enough to hear one of them say, "I guess he will be there in the morning," and strength enough to pull himself off the track. Their identity in this and other more serious crimes was thoroughly established and they were sentenced to be hanged.

The government telegraph line ran near our house to Fort McPherson. The "court" appropriated one of the poles as a means of execution.¹⁴

In the spring of the year upon learning that the headquarters of the Fifth Cavalry would be established at Fort McPherson, Cody had his wife and young daughter join him and to make their home at the post.¹⁵

With the coming of June, the tranquility of the post was given a sudden jolt. A band of marauding Indians had struck in the close vicinity of the Fort and driven off livestock. Companies I and M of the Fifth Cavalry were sent in hot pursuit. The General Order issued at that time can better tell the events:

Headquarters, District of the Republican
Fort McPherson, Nebraska, June 22, 1870
General Order No. 7

It is with feelings of gratification and pleasure that the Bvt. Major Genl. commanding the District announces to the Officers and Soldiers of his Command, the recent successful engagements with hostile Indians of Co. I, 5th Cav., under Lt. E. D. Thomas, and Co. E, 2nd U. S. Cav., under Bvt. Major E. R. Wells.

II. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 7th of June, 1870, Lt. Thomas was directed to proceed with I Co. in pursuit of thieves who were reported to have stolen some stock within a mile of Fort McPherson. The pursuit was kept up until 5 a.m. on the following day, when the thieves were found to be Indians camped on Red Willow Creek. The whole command rushed across the stream which, owing to the mirey swamps on each side, was a difficult and hazardous undertaking worthy of the highest commendation. Thirty-three animals together with the camp equipment were captured.

Lt. Thomas especially commends Scout Cody for the manner in which he followed the trail, particularly at night during the storm of rain and for gallant conduct in the fight.

III. At midnight on the 14th of June, 1870, a party of 150 Indians crossed the U.P.R.R. in the vicinity of Ogallala, Nebr. E Co., 2nd Cavalry, under the command of Major E. R. Wells with Lieut. Kenwood, 2nd Cav., at once started in pursuit and after a rapid march of 30 miles overtook the Indians.

One squaw, 10 ponies, 26 lodges, 56 pack saddles, laden with robes and the entire paraphernalia of an Indian village fell into our hands.

The Bvt. Maj. Gen. commanding, extends special praise to the men of each command, both for the promptness with which they obeyed the summons when called upon, and the persistent energy with which they pursued the enemy into a barren and desolate country, without rations, and under adverse circumstances, until the depredating parties were overtaken and their stock, together with their camp property, captured or destroyed.

It is also a matter of gratification to hear that thus far, no loss has been sustained from these sudden attacks of the hostile tribes; either to the government, railroad, or citizens, and that this security has been due to the efficiency of our armed force.

By order of

Bvt. Major General E. A. Carr

[Signed] W. C. Forbush,

Lt. 5th Cavalry, A.A.A.G.^{16, 17, 18}

Scouting and patrol duty continued to engage many of the companies with movements south to the Republican, north to the Dismal, the Niobrara, the Loup Forks and duty along about 200 miles of track of the Union Pacific.¹⁹

Civilization was constantly pressing westward in its efforts to envelop and secure that great expanse. Varied events accompanied its movement. Orders were received at the post in July assigning Company I, Fifth Cavalry, to serve as escort for a scientific exploration party of Yale College students, under Professor O. C. Marsh, who were headed for the Niobrara River Country.²⁰

Major Frank North and Companies A and B of Pawnee scouts arrived from Omaha on September 5th and received arms and equipment. On the 9th inst. Company A was assigned to duty at Plum Creek. Company B took post at O'Fallons Station as per telegraphed instructions, Department of the Platte, Omaha. The official purport further discloses that Companies A and B, Pawnee scouts were mustered out of service at this post on December 31, 1870.²¹

A blessed event came to the Cody cabin November 26, 1870, when a son was born. In search for a suitable name, a friend of the family, Major Frank North of Pawnee fame, suggested that the name of a

famous Indian scout, Kit Carson, would be fitting. So the son was named Kit Carson Cody.²²

Another example of the strictness of discipline at the fort, especially on the enlisted men, is recorded in the purport of the official records for January, 1871:

Private William M. Walker, 14th Infantry, in Post Guard House—undergoing sentence as pronounced in G. O., January 14, 1871, “To be confined to hard labor, wearing a ball and chain, for the period of one year; to forfeit all pay and allowances that are now due or may become due for the same period, except the just dues of the laundress; and then to be returned to duty with the company; and make good the time lost by desertion.”²³

A problem arose as to the right of the military to evict civilians and seize their property without due process of law and full compensation. The opposition of the non-military personnel to the demands of the military authorities was growing steadily, especially in their competition with the duly authorized sutler who operated the Post store (similar to our P. X. or Ship's Store). Every effort was being made to prevent the soldiers at the post from trading with the civilians. Guards were even placed about the businesses. The difficulty was made more legally technical by the fact that the various civilians had acquired their residences on the Military Reservation before the General Order had been issued restricting trade with soldiers. As a last resort, an order was issued placing all civilian business places “out of bounds,” and any violation by military personnel was subject to disciplinary action.²⁴

How times change! An interesting commentary of bygone days appears in the Medical Report for August, 1871:

The reduction of the soldiers' pay, which from the first of July has been \$13.00 per month in place of \$16.00 previously, has not caused as many desertions from the army as was expected. During July, twenty-four desertions; in August, eleven; whereas, during May, twenty-six desertions.²⁵

Of course, there may be some who today would say that continuous duty in the saddle, facing not only the crafty Indians, but the extreme changes of the elements, was not dangerous to life and limb.

By 1871 there were many lawless persons drifting or making a get-away into the then trackless west. Adventurers, gamblers, would-be desperadoes gravitated to the excitement and the possibility of new riches offered in the West to any person who could seize and hold them. A Post Order for September, 1871, highlights this growing situation:

Of the general worthlessness of the citizens who as adventurers seek the frontier as their abode, a competent opinion may be attained from the following order from Post Headquarters.

I. To prevent the repetition of thefts and to place the responsibility where it belongs, any citizen not employed by the Q. M. Department and borne on the rolls of the Q. M., and bearing a certificate to that effect about his person, who may be found about the public stables or the quarters of the men or the laundresses, will be arrested and placed in the guard house and the facts immediately reported to the commanding officer and the officer of the day, and the guard will be held responsible for rigid execution of this order.

II. The laundresses are paid, fed and housed by the government to wash for the officers and soldiers of the command exclusively, and from and after this date, any laundress or camp woman, or woman occupying public quarters who washes for any citizen or harbors or receives citizens at her or their quarters under any pretext whatever, will be forthwith ejected from the garrison.

Gambling has become very prevalent on the post. An order has been published regarding gambling among non-commissioned officers.²⁶

By order of
Col. W. C. Emory:

In those robust days, RHIP (rank has its privilege) was prevalent, as it always has been. On September 23, 1871, Lieutenant General P. H. Sheridan and party left the Fort on a hunting expedition across the country south to Fort Hayes in Kansas. Company F, Fifth Cavalry, consisting of 84 men, was assigned as escort. Fort McPherson being located in the center of the buffalo country, which also abounded with other large game such as elk, deer, and antelope, was the focal point for many like occasions.²⁷

As always, there were those who will deal on the miseries, frailties, and weaknesses of others. There were many "free-booters" and traders moving about the plains and mountains trading with the Indians. Their greatest power over the Indians was exerted by selling them whiskey or, as it was called "firewater," along with illegal firearms and ammunition. In return, these vicious, lawless traders received great quantities of furs, pelts and buffalo robes. The military was always searching to eliminate this highly undesirable element. On September 28, 1871, Company G, Fifth Cavalry, took the field to the south, to Killickewick on Red Willow Creek, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not any whiskey traffic was being carried on at that point.²⁸

In November the Fifth Cavalry left the Post, under orders, having been assigned to the Department of Arizona, for duty in the Southwest. As replacements, companies of the Second Cavalry, elements of

the Third Cavalry and Ninth Infantry were then attached to garrison Fort McPherson, and to continue regular patrol and scouting.²⁹

In January, 1872, the balance of the Third Cavalry arrived at Fort McPherson from Arizona,³⁰ in which territory they had been serving for some time. While fighting the Apache and other tribes of the Southwest, the Third Cavalry had acquired quite a reputation.

An event of international importance occurred in January, 1872. The Grand Duke Alexis of Russia was the guest of the United States with General Phil Sheridan as host, assisted by General George A. Custer, and Buffalo Bill as chief of hunters assisted by Texas Jack. A real buffalo hunt had been arranged under the supervision of the command at Fort McPherson. The hunting party arrived at North Platte Station January 12, 1872, by special train. Ambulances, horses, tents, supplies and everything were ready for the trip to the chosen campsite on Red Willow Creek, 60 miles south of the Fort. Companies E and K, Second Cavalry, were assigned as guards and escort. Arrangements had been made by Buffalo Bill with Todd Randall, sub-agent for certain tribes of Sioux, to have Chief Spotted Tail and a band of selected warriors at the appointed spot to join in the hunt and to add color to the entire occasion. Chief Two Lance demonstrated his prowess by shooting an arrow completely through a running buffalo. The entire hunt was proclaimed to be a great success, and the Russian gentleman returned to his homeland filled with the hospitality of this country.^{31, 32, 33, 34}

With spring coming on, Indian hostilities reopened with raids and stealing stock. There was need of food for all their families. In April, a raiding party struck quickly in the close vicinity of Fort McPherson and stole some horses belonging to the Post. Twenty-five men of Company B, Third Cavalry, under command of Captain Charles Meinhold, started in pursuit, with William F. Cody as scout assisted by Texas Jack. During this assignment, Cody was awarded the highest decoration, the Congressional Medal of Honor. The citation by the Adjutant-General of the U. S. Army and the revocation years later tell a story which is narrated by Richard J. Walsh in his story "The Making of Buffalo Bill":

On May 22, 1872, Mr. Cody was issued a Medal of Honor for gallantry in action at Platte River, Nebraska, the basis for the award being a report made by Captain Charles Meinhold, Troop B, Third U. S. Cavalry, dated at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, April 27, 1872, descriptive of the pursuit of, and action with, a marauding party of Indians by a detachment of his company under his command.

The citation as written by Captain Meinhold states:

Mr. Cody had guided Sergeant Foley's party with such skill that he approached the Indian camp within fifty yards before he was noticed. The Indians fired immediately upon Mr. Cody and Sergeant Foley. Mr. Cody killed one Indian, two others ran toward the main command and were killed. While this was going on, Mr. Cody discovered a party of six mounted Indians and two lead horses running at full speed at a distance of about two miles down the river. I at once sent Lieutenant Lawson with Mr. Cody and fifteen men in pursuit. He, in the beginning of the chase, gained a little upon them, so that they were compelled to abandon the two lead horses, which were captured, but after running more than twelve miles at full speed, our jaded horses gave out and the Indians made good their escape.

Mr. William Cody's reputation for bravery and skill as a guide is so well established that I need not say anything else but that he acted in his usual manner. [End of citation.]

For forty-four years the Congressional Medal was one of his proudest possessions, but just after his death the award was canceled and his name was struck from the Medal of Honor list. The long-delayed action was not a denial of Cody's heroism. He shared, with many others, the onus of an ancient War Department scandal. In the years after the Civil War the Medal of Honor was shamefully abused. It was awarded almost indiscriminately on the recommendation of officers of low rank. The World War finally brought retroactive reform. Under an act of Congress approved June 3, 1916, the records were re-examined and corrected. On February 15, 1916, nine hundred and eleven names, including Cody's, were permanently removed from the list. The adjutant general explains:

The Board of officers which canceled the award to Mr. Cody and certain others mentioned in its report found that the medals in question were not issued for the cause specified in the law, viz: "distinguished conduct by an *officer or enlisted man* in action involving actual conflict with an enemy by such *officer or enlisted man* or by troops with which he was serving at the time of such action." He was employed in the capacity of a civilian scout and guide at the time when he performed the act for which the medal was awarded and was not an officer or enlisted man!^{35, 36}

A fine example of the arduous duties that fell to the lot of troopers of the Cavalry is noted in the Medical Reports for July. It appears that a detachment of Company I, Third Cavalry, consisting of 42 enlisted men and two officers under command of Major Curtis, with Cody as chief of scouts, left Fort McPherson on an expedition pursuing a band of marauding Indians.

The expedition was successful in that the troops trailed the Indians to their main camp on the Missouri River in the vicinity of Fort Sully, D. T. (Dakota Territory). What disciplinary action was taken against the guilty ones is not stated. The detachment stopped at Fort Randall, D. T., on June 28th to rest their horses and secure fresh supplies for the return trip. Upon their arrival back at Fort McPherson, July 27th, they had covered 900 miles.³⁷

Cody was active in the summer and up to November 30, 1872, as guide and scout at the Fort. The winter months 1872-73 found him on the Eastern theatrical stages enacting the part of famous Indian scouts in the plays promoted by that indefatigable thrill writer, Ned Buntline.³⁸ Though busily engaged in many affairs, the Cody home was gladdened with the birth of another child in August of that year. The Post Medical Record tersely reports: "August 13, 1872, 3 p.m., Mrs. Cody, wife of Mr. William Cody, Post guide and interpreter, delivered of a daughter." This young lady was named Orra Cody.

During the latter part of that summer while "Texas Jack" Omohundo was serving as a scout at Fort McPherson, he was relieved from that duty and assigned to serve as trail agent with the Pawnee tribes. It was customary for the various tribes to leave their respective reservations and go on a summer buffalo hunt to lay up a supply of meat and robes for the coming winter. An official representative of the government was directed to accompany such hunting parties. While "Texas Jack" was busily engaged with his duties as trail agent, he had as guests Frank North and his brother Luther North, leaders of the Pawnee scouts, and George Bird Grinnell, the author, join the hunt. The Pawnees had left their reservation upon the Loup River (now Nance County, Nebraska) and headed for their favorite buffalo hunting grounds on the Republican River in southwestern Nebraska.³⁹

The Medical Record for the month of September, 1872, shows other interesting and diversified activities coming to pass at the Fort. A party of gentlemen arrived from Omaha for a buffalo hunt. The U. S. District Attorney, the U. S. Marshal, the Surveyor General and several members of the Omaha Bar were among the party. Apparently they were most successful, reporting plenty of buffalo within forty miles of the Fort and killing all the game they wanted.

Scouting patrols from southwest Nebraska reported no Indian troubles, but stated that there were quantities of large game, especially elk, deer and antelope. General Sheridan was again the ambassador of good will in the field of international relations. To take advantage of the abundance of big game around Fort McPherson, he extended an invitation to the noted English sportsman, the Earl of Dunraven, to enjoy this sport under the special guidance of Buffalo Bill Cody and Texas Jack as scouts. The Earl and the party of hunters and military escort, after final preparations at the Fort, sallied forth to partake of the exhilarating activity in the nearby hills and plains. The Earl was so pleased with the success of the hunt that he expressed a

determination to do so again as soon as opportunity afforded. ^{40, 41, 42, 43}
He later acquired a large ranch of his own and hunted often. It is hard to realize that such fine hunting existed in Nebraska within the life span of persons still now living.



WILLIAM F. "BUFFALO BILL" CODY, AS A YOUNG MAN
Nebraska State Historical Society



SUTLERS IN FRONT OF POST TRADER'S STORE, FORT MCPHERSON, 1873

National Archives

PART VI

STRUGGLES OF THE SIOUX

Suddenly all of this carefree cavorting over the countryside in search of game came to an abrupt halt. Telegraphic instructions were received September 30, 1872, alerting the entire command to be ready to proceed to Fort Laramie, W. T., (Wyoming Territory), Chief Red Cloud and his warriors had broken away from the reservation declaring war against the whites.¹ None then realized that this incident was the beginning of the last great struggle between the Indian and the conquering white man, that it would not subside for several years, and not until much blood would be spilled on both sides.

A lieutenant and a detachment of fourteen men, Company F, Third Cavalry, left the post November 25th to go up on the Loup River, where the bodies of three white men were found murdered.² The conjecture was that they had been shot by Indians. In those days, it was very handy to dispose of opposition and blame the incident upon the Indian. The patrol, bringing the bodies into Fort McPherson for burial in the post cemetery, arrived November 30th.³

As the year 1872 came to a close, the Medical Report discloses details of life as it was on a frontier army post. The Fort was garrisoned then by Headquarters, Third U. S. Cavalry, the band, and Companies B, F, I and K, Third Cavalry. The total number of recruits during the year was 343; total desertions, 85. The sick list of all kinds, 737. The prevalent diseases for the year, intermittent fever, typhoid fever, syphilis and rheumatism.

During that same period, the Post Surgeon was busy, not only with surgical and medical cases, but also delivering babies—thirteen in all, consisting of seven girls, four boys and set of twins, a boy and a girl.

Death from disease took four; from wounds, three; disability discharges were given to four as a result of injuries in line of duty; six were released for non-service connected disabilities.

That discipline was still strict, especially among the lower ranks, is borne out by the fact that the daily average occupancy of the guardhouse for the year 1872 was 18.51.⁴

The first day of the new year of 1873 was opened in a gay and gala fashion. All the officers of the Post, outfitted in their best dress uni-

forms, were engaged in calling on the ladies of the garrison during the afternoon and evening.⁵ No doubt, tea and cakes, and even libations, were served.

Fort McPherson had become the center of community life for a large surrounding area. Dances at the Post brought soldiers, settlers, ranchers, and cowboys from ranches from far and wide. Many of the ranches are well known and prominent in western tales, such as: Bratt's "Double-O"; Burk's "Flat Iron D"; Nickel's "96"; Walker's "LW."

This gaiety was short lived, for on the 4th of January reports were received that three prominent Sioux Chiefs named Whistler, Fat Badger and Hard Smeller had been killed by the Pawnees about 100 miles southward of the Post. Company B, Third Cavalry, was alerted to take the field on a moment's notice, to check on this information and to determine the general status of the Indians in that direction.⁶

This same day, five deserters were returned to the Post after being "over the hill" for eight days. Two of these gentlemen had been apprehended at a place called Elm Station on the Union Pacific Railroad, while the other three were picked up at Plum Creek Station.⁷

On January 20th, Company B, Third Cavalry, under command of Captain Meinhold, returned to the Post from their mission regarding the killing of the three Sioux Chieftains. Their scouting trip had extended into Kansas along Little Beaver Creek on the Republican River. They had discovered the dead bodies of the Sioux Chiefs at a point called White Man's Fork. From statements made by the white settlers and from the condition of the bodies and other circumstances, Captain Meinhold was quite positive that the Indians had been murdered by white men. An outlaw gang, which was known as "Wild Bill's Outfit," was operating in that section of the country and was thought to be the guilty ones. This patrol had covered 246 miles with the temperature registering as low as twenty degrees below zero at times. It was alleged to be known that the murder had been the work of Wild Bill Hickok. Why the government took no steps to punish this deliberate crime, which infuriated the tribes and endangered all settlers and whites on the frontier,^{8, 9} is difficult to understand. Mari Sandoz in her book, "The Buffalo Hunters," contends that Wild Bill Hickok was the guilty one.

The government had established a policy of handling the Indian problem by ordering each tribe to stay on a definite reservation. This created unrest among the Indians which daily was growing more difficult to quell. In compliance with orders from Department Head-

quarters, Companies F and H, Third Cavalry, left their Post on February 20, 1873, for the purpose of ordering "No Flesh's" band of Sioux Indians back on their reservation.¹⁰

This restlessness among the tribes caused the white settlers to ask for military guards. Companies K and F, Third Cavalry, left their camp on Stinking Water Creek and moved to Red Willow Creek as such protection, later returning to Fort McPherson.¹¹

Food and horses were an ever-present and growing need among the Indian tribes who were being forcefully restrained on the reservations. On the morning of April 4, 1873, the bugle call "boots and saddles" sent Company I, Third Cavalry, in hot pursuit of a daring band of Indians who had driven off the Quartermaster's herd of 171 horses and mules from the grazing ground near the Fort. The troopers were able to recover the herd after a dash of twenty or more miles. This Indian coup caused great excitement throughout the area.¹²

This turbulence among the Indians must have imparted itself to nature, for that spring nature was to strike out and take its toll of lives. Unexpectedly, on the 14th of April of that year of '73, a terrific blizzard with extremely high winds hit Nebraska in all its fury. No mail from west or east was received at the Fort for several days. The reports were that the storm was even more severe sixty miles east of Fort McPherson, and that the trains were snowbound at Grand Island. Numerous accidents occurred, and many persons lost their lives by getting lost and frozen to death. The winds were so strong that much property was destroyed and even telegraph communication was interrupted for some time.¹³

Another tragedy occurred while Company F, Third Cavalry, was patrolling the Republican Valley. As the day ended on May 31st, they camped at a point on Blackwood Creek. That night during a heavy rain, a large flood suddenly and without warning swept down the valley carrying everything before it. Six troopers were drowned, and twenty-six horses were lost.

All that spring, patrols were continuously in the field. Rain fell incessantly, causing undue hardship for torrential streams and mud were everywhere. As spring turned to summer, the troops were in the saddle constantly scouting and patrolling to keep a steady check on the various tribes.¹⁴

During the summer of 1873 the government gave permission to the Pawnee tribe to leave their reservation, which is now Nance County, Nebraska, for a period of sixty days for their annual buffalo hunt.

As was customary, the women and children accompanied the warriors on such treks. The favorite hunting grounds were in the Republican River country where the herds of buffalo were more plentiful. A white man, one John W. Williamson, was assigned to serve as trail agent.

For some unknown reason, a much larger group of Sioux were permitted to leave their reservation in northwest Nebraska at about the same time for the purpose of hunting in the same area. The Sioux learned of the presence of the Pawnee, and even though under the direction of a white trail agent, the Sioux planned a sneak attack. On August 6th, at a point just east of where Trenton, Nebraska, now is, the larger band of Sioux charged the Pawnees who made a valiant stand. After a heated engagement, the sheer weight of numbers and the lack of ammunition forced the entire Pawnee hunting party consisting of the women, children and warriors to flee down a canyon in an attempt to escape. The helpless were slaughtered as they sought to get out of danger. At about this time, a detachment of the Third U. S. Cavalry from Fort McPherson appeared on the scene. The Sioux at the sight of the cavalry turned back and left, which no doubt saved many more lives among the Pawnee. The estimate was that approximately two hundred Pawnee, mostly women and children, had been killed.

This ended the last of the great tribal wars. This tragic blow to the tribe that had been a friend of the white man had come about through further mismanagement of the Indian Department by the authorities in Washington.¹⁵

According to the "Book," (Regulations or Manual) life on military posts must, of necessity, follow a schedule. In those stalwart days, the bugle was an important instrument. It not only awakened the troops and later put them in the "sack" at eventide, but also assisted in taking care of most of the intervening time, as borne out by the following:

G. O. No. 17.

Until further notice, the following list of Calls will be observed.

Trumpeter's Call for Reveille.	Broad daylight
Assembly and Reveille.	10 Minutes after
Stables immediately after, without call and followed by Police of Company Quarters and Grounds.	
Breakfast Call.	7:00 a.m.
Surgeon's Call.	7:15 a.m.
First Call for Dress Parade.	8:00 a.m.

Dress Parade (daily, Sunday excepted).....	8:15 a.m.
Guard Mount, immediately after	
Water Call.....	9:00 a.m.
Fatigue Call for Prisoners.....	9:00 a.m.
Drill Call—Boots and Saddles Drill.....	10:00 a.m.
Recall from Drill.....	10:30 a.m.
Recall from Fatigue (Prisoners).....	12:00 N
Dinner Call.....	12:15 p.m.
Orderly Call.....	1:00 p.m.
Fatigue Call, followed by Stables.....	4:00 p.m.
Recall from Fatigue.....	5:00 p.m.
Supper.....	No call sounded
Trumpeter's Call for Retreat.....	15 minutes before Sunset
Assembly and Retreat.....	Sunset
Trumpeter's Call for Tatoo.....	8:30 p.m.
Assembly and Tatoo.....	8:45 p.m.
Taps.....	9:00 p.m.
First Call for Sunday Morning Inspection.....	8:00 a.m.
To arms.....	8:15 a.m. ¹⁸

The War Department, in the fall of '73, established a National Cemetery at Fort McPherson and described its boundaries.¹⁷ This cemetery is still in existence five miles south of Maxwell, Nebraska. It is a beautiful and quaint resting place for the men who have served their country, from the days of 1819 at Fort Atkinson on the wide Missouri to and including far-away Korea.

At the conclusion of the hunt with Thomas P. Medley of London, England, in July 1874, Cody returned to Fort McPherson where he was hired as the guide for the Big Horn Expedition under command of Lt. Col. Anson Mills. This duty lasted from August 7 to October 2, 1874.¹⁸

As a new year approached, an expedition against the Sioux was being planned by the District Command for February, 1874. Three officers and eighty-two enlisted men of Company B, Third Cavalry, were transferred from McPherson to the Post at Spotted Tail Agency, W. T. (Wyoming Territory) in setting up the procedural tactics of the expedition out of Fort Laramie. Companies F, I, and K, Third Cavalry, were retained at Fort McPherson with other troops for continued patrol and scouting duty south along the Republican River and the Loup and Dismal rivers to the north, checking on rumors of depredation by Indians. Troops from McPherson also were assigned

for garrison duty at various posts along the railroad. These duties kept the troops of the fort busily engaged for the remainder of that spring and summer.¹⁹

In March of 1874, Camp Robinson, later named Fort Robinson, was established north of Fort McPherson to serve as a guard over the Sioux reservations in northwest Nebraska at the Red Cloud Agency on the White River, and in the nearby Dakota Territory.²⁰ This old fort is still a sight to behold just west of Crawford, Nebraska.

In September some Indians came down out of the hills and caused a scare by taking property from around Brady Island, a station just east of Fort McPherson on the Union Pacific. A detail from Companies K and I, Third Cavalry, started in pursuit, but after trailing the culprits northwest into the hills, lost the trail because of heavy rain.²¹

With the beginning of hunting season in the fall of 1874, Texas Jack accepted the position as chief guide for the Earl of Dunraven, who organized another big hunting party which was headed for the Yellowstone Country.²²

As the leaves changed with the coming of fall in 1874, conditions among the white settlers were growing worse. They were short of food and continuously subject to thefts by Indians and others unknown. In October, to alleviate this situation, a thirty-five man detail of Company K, Third Cavalry, left the Fort for the Red Willow Creek country to hunt buffalo for destitute settlers in that region. They killed nineteen on Stinking Water Creek and nine at White Man's Fork, distributing the meat to the most needy. Not being able to find any more buffalo, they returned to the Post October 25th having covered 334 miles on this duty. Several such patrols were in the field during the remainder of the fall and early winter rendering assistance.^{23, 24}

The ever present threat of the Sioux, who had been partially corralled on reservations in the Dakota Territory near the Black Hills and in the northwest part of the new state of Nebraska, caused great anxiety among the settlers in the Loup Valleys. The Pawnee Indian Reservation was to the east and south, farther down the Loups where Nance County, Nebraska, now is. The Sioux, who were bitter enemies of the Pawnee, encouraged the young braves to make sneak attacks on the Pawnee and harass everyone along the way. As protection for the North Loup country and surrounding area, a fort was erected in the upper part of the Loup Valley. The purport of the official monthly

report at Fort McPherson for December, 1874, states "Military Division—names the recently established post on the north fork of the Loup: Fort Hartsuff. Announces above post as an independent Post."²⁵ The old fort still stands, used as farm buildings, a few miles north of Ord, Nebraska, east across the North Loup River from Elyria, Nebraska.

Through the generosity of Dr. Glen Auble of Ord, Nebraska, who purchased the site, the title to the fort was deeded to the State of Nebraska. Plans are shaping to preserve and make a park, with a museum and recreational area.

Besides the continued patrolling and scouting, a new duty was assigned to troops of Fort McPherson. This different assignment was in the nature of that of arbitrators or compromisers. In March, 1875, a detachment of troops from B, C, and K Companies, Third Cavalry, in all fifty-six enlisted men and officers, were ordered to the vicinity of Stinking Water Creek for the purpose of settling alleged difficulties between whites and Indians. The report states that the detachment of troops returned to the post after covering 240 miles. No casualties!²⁶ The record does not disclose whether or not the mission was accomplished.

On April 28th a Lieutenant and a forty-one man detail left the Post in pursuit of a band of Cheyennes recently escaped from their reservation. These troops were also to patrol the country west between Fort McPherson and Sidney, Nebraska. They discovered the trail of the Cheyennes and followed it as far as Court House Rock where it was lost, due probably to the Indians' dispersing into many small groups and taking different paths, to meet later at a given point.²⁷

Then still another marauding band of Indians south of the South Platte River required a detachment of troops from the Fort to take to the saddle and sally forth in that direction.²⁸

The uneasiness to the north among the Sioux, who kept drifting south off their reservations, was an ever present hazard. As a check on this situation, a detachment of Company B, Third Cavalry, left the Post on July 16, 1875, to scout the country in the vicinity of the mouth of the Dismal River. The troops scouted that area, then followed down the north branch of the Loup to Fort Hartsuff where they stopped to rest and draw additional supplies. They then took a course to the southwest across country to Fort McPherson arriving July 28th, having covered 336 miles.²⁹

Company M, Third Cavalry, arrived back at the Post on Novem-

ber 7th from the Black Hills expedition.³⁰ The discovery of gold in the Hills and the viciousness of grasping whites was creating a sinister crisis in that area. The government had made promises to the Sioux tribes and signed a covenant in 1868 known as Fort Laramie Treaty, granting to the Sioux a large area including the Black Hills. The white man's lust for gold caused him to violate all laws and treaties. Momentum was gathering rapidly among the Sioux tribes to strike back in the hope of forever saving their homes and hunting grounds.

The new year 1876 came on with thinly veiled hate surging among the Sioux tribes and the Cheyennes on their reservations. With these mighty tribes on trigger edge, the foreboding unrest spread and invaded the many lesser tribes. This meant that troops at all the forts on the northern plains had to be in readiness to meet any emergency on a moment's notice. None, though, could visualize that this ominous hostility foreshadowed a coming major tragedy.

As in all military establishments there must be replacements. So it was at a Cavalry post such as Fort McPherson. There were, from time to time, details of newly enlisted men, known today as "boots" or "rookies," arriving at the Post for assignment. Apparently in February, 1876, a large group of replacements arrived, for the Medical Report briefly states, "Large number of *wounds* this month (mostly contusions) may be accounted to ignorance of riding and caring for horses."³¹ Tallyho!

In May of that year, Companies B and L of the Third Cavalry, fully equipped for field service, left Fort McPherson en route to Medicine Bow, W. T. (Wyoming Territory) to join the Big Horn expedition. Two companies of the Twenty-third Infantry arrived from Omaha Barracks as relief garrison in addition to troops already at Fort McPherson.³² A full scale war against the Sioux had been declared by the military high command as a retaliation for their fighting and outrages in the Black Hills and because of Sitting Bull's threatening attitude. The Big Horn Expedition was organized to strike and keep pressing the Sioux until they would yield. General George Crook, Department Commander, was in the field with the troops. The results of this movement of the military forces was to be a bitter lesson to the military. The Sioux instead of fleeing readied for battle. They assumed the offensive striking when least expected, catching various commands off balance, resulting in heavy casualties among the expeditionary forces.³³ Crazy Horse stopped General Crook

at the Battle of the Rosebud River forcing him to retire instead of converging with the other forces to the north.

The lesser tribes to the south were sullen and roving about in small bands. In compliance with orders, a detachment of Company H, Third Cavalry, left Fort McPherson on June 8th for Julesburg for the purpose of destroying or driving across the North Platte River all Indians found wandering between the two Platte Rivers (North and South), and to afford any needed protection to settlers. On June 22nd another detachment from Company H headed for Ash Hollow to guard settlers in that vicinity from hostile Indians.³⁴

Several days after that fateful day of June 25th, 1876, the telegraph at Fort McPherson tapped out the unbelievable news that just reached the higher command and the nation. The message told of the disastrous annihilation of Gen. George A. Custer and a large segment of the fighting Seventh U. S. Cavalry, by the combined forces of the Sioux tribes, under Sitting Bull, and the Cheyennes on the Little Bighorn in Montana Territory.³⁵

All military establishments on the frontier within striking distance of the Sioux and Cheyenne tribes were fully alerted for every possible danger. Scouting parties were kept continuously in the field, to assure that the commands would be warned as quickly as possible of any impending danger. The Indians realizing that the armed forces would be coming in ever greater numbers dispersed over the wide mountainous country to the west, and a large number under Sitting Bull sought protection by crossing the Canadian border to the north.

Though the situation was tense throughout the West, the benevolence of the government was again disclosed by an Army General Order issued in July, 1876, which the purport at Fort McPherson stated was "relative to the allowance of straw for bedding for enlisted men and laundresses."³⁶

During the last of the summer months and early fall, Company H, Third Cavalry, was on detached duty at Fort Sidney riding patrol between that point and Red Cloud Agency, north on the White River near Fort Robinson, Nebraska.³⁷

A change in command took place on November 7, 1876, when General E. A. Carr with Companies C, E, G and N, Fifth Cavalry, in compliance with written instructions, Department of the Platte, having left Fort Robinson again assumed command of Fort McPherson. Before the arrival of these new troops, Company G, Twenty-

third Infantry, had left the Post on October 31st for duty with another Powder River Expedition.³⁸

For some time before 1876, there were available different makes of rifles that had capabilities of rapid fire. The first to prove effective on the frontier was the Henry, the predecessor of the Winchester. Probably the most famous rifle was the Winchester, which had first been available in Model 1866, then came the renowned Model 1873. These were brought to finer perfection in the Model 1876. All were lever action with multiple shots without reloading—a very important factor in firepower. The sturdy Spencer carbine, and its patents, had been available from 1863 until they were absorbed by purchase by the Winchester Company.

Custer's troops, as well as all other troops in 1876, were armed with single-shot, breech-loading rifles, Springfield Model 1873, while the Indians were armed with many of the better weapons, by issue from the Federal Indian Office. In spite of this, in 1876, the Army was still adhering^{39, 40} to outmoded weapons as is disclosed by an A. G. O. (Army General Order) which appears in the monthly purport at Fort McPherson, "Relating to the issue of Springfield muzzle-loading rifles, Caliber 58."⁴¹

PART VII

THE PASSING OF THE FRONTIER

The coming of 1877 found the troopers still engaged in regular garrison duty along with service in the field. The larcenous propensities of certain individuals inhabiting the frontier is substantiated by another A. G. O. (Army General Order) which mentioned a detachment of the Third Cavalry scouting the countryside for horse thieves.¹

Pursuing such wayward gentlemen, who coveted the horses and cattle or gold of their neighbors, had certain inherent dangers. The six gun, sometimes called the "equalizer," the "peacemaker," or the "44," manufactured by the "COLT PT F. A. MFG. CO. HARTFORD, CT USA," in the hands of a determined hombre, be he for or against the law, was a factor to consider. Many unwritten and unheralded acts of sheer heroism or viciousness transpired almost daily on all sides in the winning of the West. The cavalry trooper was a big factor in the final outcome. His adherence to orders, come what may, kept crowding the undesirable and lawless out of the country. Many of the lonely early sheriffs and settlers welcomed the sound of the canter or full gallop of an approaching detachment of U. S. Cavalry troopers.²

September 19, 1877, an urgent telegraphic dispatch arrived at Fort McPherson notifying the commanding officer of the Post that a Union Pacific train had been held up and robbed. The message directed that he send all available troops at once to assist in apprehending and arresting the thieves.³ The holdup had been the boldest train robbery that had occurred in the West. Later, it was learned that it had been planned by the notorious Sam Bass, the Texas outlaw, and five others. The details for the robbery, it was later learned, had been readied while the gang loitered around Ogallala, Nebraska, letting their trail cool from the stage holdup on Whitewood Creek up Dakota way where the stage driver had been killed. When the train stopped at Big Springs, Nebraska, a station west of Ogallala, the outlaws were ready. The train crew and passengers were covered while a rapid thorough search was made of all persons and the express car. Sixty thousand dollars in newly minted gold coins was among the loot seized. Excitement swept the entire area. Everyone was eager to

be the recipient of the \$10,000.00 reward offered by the Union Pacific Railroad.⁴ The alertness and utter fearlessness of an Ogallala merchant in tracking and identifying this gang of outlaws later proved to be their downfall.

As the year 1877 closed and 1878 unfolded, the border country was quieting down. The force at Fort McPherson was also slowly dwindling by assignment to other military establishments.

The reports throughout the years since the inception of the Fort in 1863, disclosed that there were numerous troopers of Irish extraction. With the lack of action on other fronts, it would appear from the Post monthly purport for May, 1877, that the sons of Erin made up for it in other ways. The list sets forth the following: "The trials of Privates Fitzgerald, McBride, Russell, O'Grady, O'Neill, Lyons, Hoffman, O'Donald, Sharron, Green, Flannigan, Vniache and McCarty . . ." An earlier purport had warned officers against intemperance.^{5, 6}

In mid-autumn, there came an alert requiring a detachment of Company L, Fifth Cavalry, to proceed at once to Fort Sidney to escort a band of Cheyenne Indian prisoners to Fort Wallace, Kansas.⁷

An incident occurred in the fall of 1878 which proved to the world that a small group of determined individuals can accomplish almost the impossible against great odds. About three hundred Cheyennes, consisting of men, women and children who had been moved to a reservation near Fort Reno, Oklahoma Territory, could no longer stand the restraint and treatment on that barren land. Vowing to return to their homeland on the shores of the rushing and turbulent Yellowstone River far to the north, they fled the reservation under Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf and started the long trek northward. All forts were alerted to intercept and return these people. Until the last, this small band was able to elude the attempts of the armed forces to capture them. Their bravery and strategy was outstanding. In their course northward, they crossed the Union Pacific Railroad some miles west of Fort McPherson. Dull Knife and the remnants of the weary group that followed him were captured October 25th on Chadron Creek a few miles east of Fort Robinson. Little Wolf and his band were apprehended in March of '79 farther north and to the west.

January 1, 1879, Company L, Fifth Cavalry, was ordered from Fort McPherson to Fort Robinson. While there, they were involved with the Cheyenne Indian break and in the so-called battle engagements on the 10th and 13th inst., near the vicinity of Fort Robinson.

The captives were under Chief Dull Knife, a brave and fearless leader. To force these proud Indians to yield to the demands of their white captors that they return south to the barren reservation, they were refused food and clothing. Though the temperature was below zero, the Indians were held prisoners in empty unheated barracks. The captives all pledged to die together and though starving and poorly armed, they escaped and fought off the troops in the nearby snow-covered hills until all but a few women and children were dead. The handling of this situation brought no credit to our government. All frontier history affords no record of a more heroic, forlorn hope than this Cheyenne sortie.⁸ This plaintive story of a search for freedom and happiness has been immortalized by Mari Sandoz in her book "*Cheyenne Autumn*."⁹

Among the casualties to the troops in this Cheyenne break, the Post Medical Record at Fort McPherson shows that Pvt. William K. Good was killed in action at Little Blue Creek, January 10, 1879, and Corporal Pulver was wounded.¹⁰

January 30th a small detail of the Ninth Infantry was sent on scouting duty to the Loup Fork and Snake Creek to disperse some bands of raiding Indians.¹¹

Company L, Third Cavalry, as part of a guard detail was ordered to escort Cheyenne prisoners from Fort Robinson to Fort Sidney. After completion of this assignment, it reported back to Fort McPherson for regular duty.¹²

Companies H and L, Fifth Cavalry, were assigned to detached service on the Ute Expedition west of the Rockies from October 1, 1879, to February, 1880. The great expanse of the far west was rapidly filling with settlers of all kinds. There were those that were tillers of the soil, who organized granges, and others who wanted the unfenced range upon which to run the herds of cattle. This type of economy had no place for the Ute tribes, except to force them to accept small reservations in undesirable locations out of the way of progress. The other units remaining at Fort McPherson were, from time to time, being transferred to other posts, mostly in the Wyoming Territory.¹³

Pursuant to Special Order No. 26, Department of the Platte, dated March 25, 1880, Fort McPherson was declared surplus, to be abandoned and decommissioned in April of that year, though the last Record of Events is dated, Fort McPherson, June 5, 1880. Thus passed a frontier fort that had played an important part in that phase

of the Civil War which the Confederacy had been accused of fomenting and inciting among the western Indians. A fort it was that had guarded the Overland Trail, giving protection to the weary traveler of the plains. This Post had played its role in the building of the Union Pacific as a part of the transcontinental band of steel binding West to East. The troopers stationed there served far and wide on the broad expanse of the frontier in the struggle to wrest the plains and mountains from the Indian. Theirs was a job well done. When the colors came down for the last time at this old Indian fort, an era had passed—a new and challenging future lay ahead.

Now the shadows of the old fort, and the men who lived and died within its walls, stand guard over the hallowed ground where lie buried our fighting men of many wars. This National Cemetery is the resting place of men who died in the early efforts to control and win the fur trade in the struggle with England, 1819 to 1827, at Fort Atkinson; from old South Pass; the Grattan Massacre at Fort Laramie, 1854; the Indian Wars of 1864; and the many western posts of the '60's and '70's. Joined with them in their final resting place are men who fought at Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, Omaha Beach, St. Lo, Bastogne, Hollandia, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa—and Korea, and from many other places on the face of the earth. Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Indian Scouts, all now joined as true Americans. As the sun sets in the west, one's heart skips a beat, a lump comes in the throat—as the last rays of the sun light "Old Glory" as she waves over the rows of white headmarkers surrounded by green grass and the old brick wall, all of which now go to make up Fort McPherson National Cemetery.

What more fitting spot could have been chosen as a resting place for our loved ones than this National Shrine, erected by the side of the "old trail," where long ago sounded the thundering herds of buffalo, the galloping pony of the Indian, the clatter of the hoofs of the lonely pony express rider, the canter of the cavalry, the rolling caissons of the artillery, the creaking of the old covered wagons, all now dimmed and silenced in eternity.

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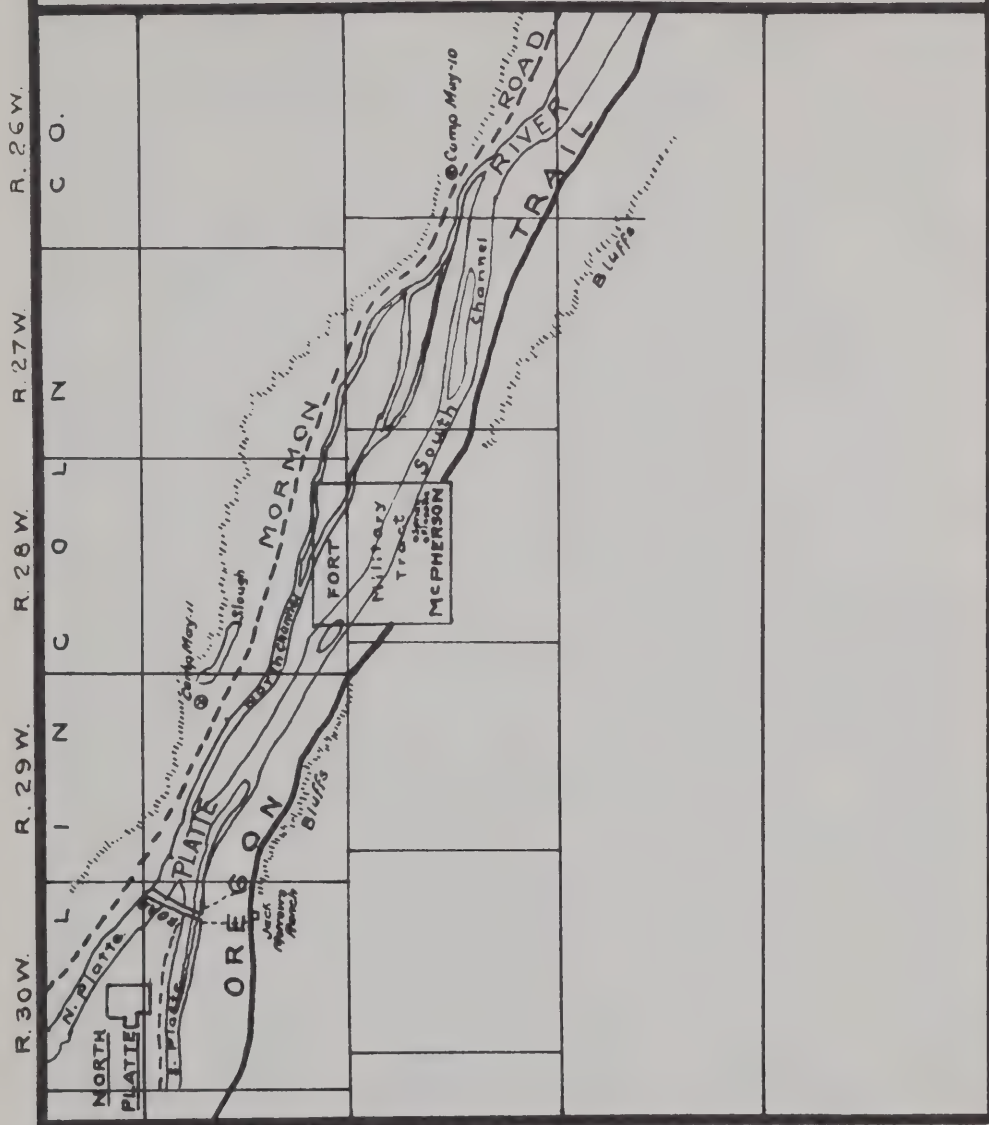
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T. 13 N. T. 12 N. T. 11 N. T. 10 N.
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For continuation westward of Oregon and Mormon Trails see Volume 2 of this Series.

MAP LOCATING PLATTE RIVER ROUTES AND FORT MCPHERSON



FIVE ENLISTED MEN IN DRESS UNIFORM AT FORT MCPHERSON

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APPENDIX A

BRIGADIER-GENERAL JAMES B. McPHERSON, U.S.A.

(Deceased)

Brigadier-General James B. McPherson was born in Ohio in 1829, and graduated at the Military Academy, July 1, 1853. He was promoted brevet second lieutenant, Corps of Engineers, the same day, and second lieutenant December 18, 1854. He served at the Military Academy as assistant instructor of practical engineering to September 6, 1854, and was assistant engineer in the construction and repairs of the defences of New York harbor; as superintending engineer of the building of Fort Delaware; of the construction of the defences of Alcatraz Island, San Francisco harbor; in charge of the engineer operations at Boston harbor, Massachusetts, and recruiting sappers, miners, and pontoniers, from 1854 to 1861. He was promoted first lieutenant December 13, 1858, and was appointed captain of the Nineteenth Infantry May 14, 1861, which he declined, and received his promotion as captain of engineers August 6, 1861. He was appointed Lieutenant-colonel of staff November 12, 1861, and colonel of staff May 1, 1862. He served as aide-de-camp to General Halleck, and as chief engineer on the staff of General Grant from November 12, 1861, to the date of his appointment as brigadier-general of volunteers, May 15, and major-general of volunteers, October 8, 1862.

No better sketch of his military life can be furnished than that given by General Grant, when recommending him for promotion, as follows:

He has been with me in every battle since the commencement of the Rebellion, except Belmont. At Forts Henry and Donelson, Shiloh and the siege of Corinth, as a staff-officer and engineer, his services were conspicuous and highly meritorious. At the second battle of Corinth his skill as a soldier was displayed in successfully carrying reinforcements to the besieged garrison when the enemy was between him and the point to be reached. In the advance through Central Mississippi, General McPherson commanded one wing of the army with all the ability possible to show, — he having the lead in the advance and the rear retiring.

In the campaign and siege terminating with the fall of Vicksburg, General McPherson has filled a conspicuous part. At the battle of Port Gibson, it was under his direction that the enemy was driven, late in the afternoon, from a position they had succeeded in holding all day against an obstinate attack. His corps, the advance always under his immediate eye, were the pioneers in the movement from Port

Gibson to Hawkinson's Ferry to Jackson the Seventeenth Army Corps marched on roads not traveled by other troops, fighting the entire battle of Raymond alone; and the bulk of Johnston's army was fought by this corps, entirely under the management of General McPherson. At Champion Hills the Seventeenth Corps and General McPherson were conspicuous. All that could be termed a battle there was fought by the divisions of General McPherson's corps and General Hovey's division of the Thirteenth Corps. In the assault of the 22nd of May, on the fortifications of Vicksburg, and during the entire siege, General McPherson and his command took unfading laurels. He is one of the ablest engineers and most skillful generals. I would respectfully, but urgently, recommend his promotion to the position of brigadier-general in the regular army.

As a result of the above letter, General McPherson was appointed brigadier-general U. S. Army August 1, 1863, and he was awarded—October, 1863—a medal of honor, by the officers of his corps, for “the gallant manner in which he had led them during the campaign and siege of Vicksburg.”

General McPherson was killed July 22, 1864, in the repulse of a sortie from Atlanta, Georgia. Soon after his death, General Grant addressed the following letter to General McPherson's aged grandmother:

I am glad to know the relatives of the lamented Major-General McPherson are aware of the more than friendship existing between him and myself. A nation grieves at the loss of one so dear to our nation's cause. It is a selfish grief, because the nation had more to expect from him than from almost any one living. I join in this selfish grief, and add the grief of personal love for the departed. He formed for some time one of my military family. I knew him well. It may be some consolation to you to know that every officer and every soldier who served under your grandson, felt for him the highest reverence. Your bereavement is great, but cannot excel mine.

Edited by Lieutenant-Colonel William H. Powell, U. S. Army Officers of the Army and Navy who served in the Civil War. Published by L. R. Hamersly & Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1893.

APPENDIX B

RECORD OF WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE ADJUTANT GENERAL
RECORD OF MEDICAL HISTORY OF POST
Volume 200—National Archives
Washington, D. C.

* * *

MAP OF FORT McPHERSON, NEBRASKA
AND VICINITY

* * *

LOCALITY AND HISTORY OF POST

Fort McPherson, Nebraska, is situated in latitude $41^{\circ} 5'$ north, longitude $23^{\circ} 35'$ west, on the south bank of the Platte River, distant from North Platte City directly 18 miles, and 5 miles in a southeasterly direction from McPherson Station, U. P. R. R.

Fort McPherson was first occupied by Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry September 29, 1863. General Order No. 1 dated Cottonwood Springs, Nebraska, refers to Major George M. O'Brien, Third Battalion, Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, as having assumed command of the Post and that the encampment was to be known thereafter by the name of "Cantonment McKean"—it retained that name until General Order No. 17 dated Headquarters Post Cottonwood Springs, Nebraska Territory, May 18, 1864, said order as follows:

This Post shall be called Post Cottonwood until further orders, from and after this date. . . . A reservation for Military purposes is hereby established bounded as follows, to wit: Commencing on a point on the military road 2 miles in a southeasterly direction from the Flag Staff situated in the center of the parade grounds—Thence north to the Platte River—thence up the Platte River 4 miles—Thence south to a point on the military road, 2 miles in a northwesterly direction, 8 miles—Thence south 15 miles—Thence east 20 miles—Thence north 15 miles—Thence in a northwesterly direction 8 miles to the place of beginning.

[Signed] George M. O'Brien,
Major, 7th Iowa Volunteer Cavalry,
Commanding Post

Major O'Brien remained in command of the Post until relieved by Col. S. W. Summers, 7th Iowa Cavalry, September 28, 1864. Colonel Summers was relieved of command January 14th, 1865, by Capt. Charles F. Porter, First Neb. Veterans Cavalry. Major George O'Brien reassumed command of Post February 14, 1865, was relieved by Lt. Col. William Baumer, First Neb. Vet. Cav., August 4th, 1865. Major Thomas J. Majors, assumed command September 16, 1865, Lt. Col. R. E. Fleming assumed command December 24, 1865. The name of the Post was changed to Fort McPherson on or about March 11, 1866, but no order to that effect has been preserved among Post Records. Major Henry Norton assumed command of Post April 5, 1866, while Major Norton was in command of post Gen. Order No. 9 dated June 24, 1866, was promulgated changing the boundary line of Reservation as follows: Commencing at a point 1 mile south of Flag Staff in the center of the grounds—thence 2 miles east—thence 4 miles north—thence 4 miles west—thence 4 miles south—thence 2 miles east to place of beginning. Captain and Bvt. Lt. Col. G. W. Mizner, 2nd U. S. Cavalry, assumed command of Post on or about March 4, 1867. Capt. D. R. Ransom, 3rd U. S. Artillery., Bvt. Colonel U. S. Army, assumed command June 29, 1867. Bvt. Brig.-General W. W. Wessells, Lt. Col., 18th U. S. Infantry assumed command July, 1867. Capt. D. R. Ransom, Bvt. Col. U. S. Army, re-assumed command of Post, October 17, 1867. Bvt. Brig. General J. N. Palmer, Lt. Col. 2nd U. S. Cavalry assumed command December 8, 1867. Bvt. Major General Thomas J. Wood, Colonel, 2nd U. S. Cavalry, assumed command December 18, 1867. General Palmer reassumed command January 18th 1868, was relieved by Major George W. Howland, 2nd U. S. Cavalry, July 13th, 1868, Bvt. Colonel A. G. Brackett, 2nd Cavalry, Lt. Colonel, U. S. Army assumed command of Post March 30, 1869.

[Signed] A. D. Wilson, Asst.
Surgeon, U. S. Army, Post Surgeon

DESCRIPTION OF POST

Fort McPherson, Nebraska, including both corrals, covers an area of 1,671,480 square feet, equal to 38 acres, 1 road, 19 perches, 21 yards and 1 foot. There are in all, 39 buildings in the garrison, and all with the exception of Post Hospital, Hospital Laundry and Company Stables, are painted with fire-proof paint (brown) Hospital buildings, etc., are white-washed semi-annually. The buildings are spacious, well ventilated, etc., with windows, large and numerous.

NOTE: The following notes are intended merely as a synopsis of materials from which constructed—dimensions of buildings, etc.

Building No. 1—Commanding officer's dwelling, main building 65' long 20 feet wide; wing 24 by 20 feet.

Buildings No. 2, 4 and 6—Officers Quarters, main buildings 42 by 20 feet; wings, 24 by 20 feet.

Buildings No. 3, 5, 7 and 8—Officers Quarters, (double) main buildings, 54 feet by 20 feet; wings, 24 by 30 feet.

Building No. 9—Post Surgeons Quarters main building 42 by 20 feet; wings 24 by 20 feet.

Building No. 10—Post Hospital (for description, plan and materials from which constructed, see page adjoining map [not found]).

Building No. 11—Post Chaplains Quarters, main building, 42 by 20 feet; wings, 24 by 20 feet

Building No. 12—Post Hospital Comdry., frame building 24 by 15 feet, shingle roof, lined and ceiled with boards.

Building No. 13—Post Work Shops—one half constructed of logs and the other half of boards—frame part has a shingle roof and log portion earth roof, dimensions 220 by 20 feet, it is partitioned off at intervals for the different trades, such as saddlery, blacksmithing, painting, carpentering; a portion of log building is used for workmen's dining and sleeping apartments.

Building No. 14—Post Commissary—"portable" frame building—96 by 24 feet; board roof is kept in excellent condition at all times, is well supplied constantly with good, wholesome supplies.

Building No. 15—Band Quarters, frame building, lathed, plastered and shingle roof, main building 40 by 20 feet, containing 2 rooms, sleeping and practice room, wing 20 by 18, containing 2 rooms, dining room and kitchen, a new comfortable building.

Building No. 16—Post Theatre—built by a detachment of Battery E, 3rd U. S. Artillery on or about September or October, 1867, of logs and cottonwood boards, main building 54 by 30 feet (auditorium). Stage, including "Green Rooms," 54 by 20 feet. This institution proved to be a decided success. One performance was rendered by the "troops" every week (Saturday nights) and were usually well attended by the officers and their ladies, and the enlisted men of the garrison. The performances consisted of selected "Dramas," "comedies," etc., and were rendered exceedingly well for amateurs.

Building No. 17—Company Quarters—log building, shingle roof, 132 by 30 feet.

Building No. 18—Post Adjutant's Office and Telegraph Office—log building, shingle roof, plastered ceiling, 45 by 20 feet.

Buildings No. 19 and 21—Company quarters, frame buildings, shingle roofs, main building 108 by 27 feet; wings 69 by 20 feet; wings are divided into three rooms, bath, dining rooms and kitchen.

Buildings No. 20 and 22—Company quarters, log buildings, shingle roofs, main buildings 108 by 27 feet; wings 20 by 69 feet; wings are divided into three rooms, bath, dining rooms and kitchen.

Buildings, No. 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 33—Laundresses Quarters—one half frame buildings with shingle roofs, one half log buildings with earth roofs, main buildings

40 by 20 feet; wings 20 by 20 feet. Two rooms and a kitchen allotted to each family, are good substantial buildings.

Building No. 27—Post Quartermaster Warehouse—132 by 30 feet, log building, shingle roof, a good substantial structure.

Building No. 28—Post Forage House—130 by 30 feet, log building, shingle roof, a good substantial structure.

[Signed] R. D. Wilson,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. A.

CIRCULAR NO 8

WAR DEPARTMENT SURGEON-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Washington, May 1, 1875.

A REPORT ON THE HYGIENE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY with DESCRIPTIONS OF MILITARY POSTS

* * *

FORT McPHERSON, NEBRASKA

Report by Assistant Surgeon C. L. Heizmann, United States Army.

Fort McPherson, Nebraska, is situated in latitude $41^{\circ} 3'$ north, longitude $23^{\circ} 35'$ west, at an elevation above the sea of 2,770 feet, on the south bank of the Platte River, twelve miles east of the confluence of the North and South Platte Rivers, eighteen miles from North Platte City, and five miles southeast from McPherson Station on the Union Pacific Railroad. For history of the post see Circular No. 4, Surgeon-General's Office, 1870, page 334.

The post commands the section separating the Sioux and Pawnees, as well as the country settled by the whites along the railroad—the Republican and Loup Fork streams. Predatory and hunting bands of the former visit to the vicinity, none, however, reside in the immediate neighborhood. The number of white citizens, traders, contractors' agents, and employees settled on the reservation is 61.

The buildings are arranged about a quadrangle 844 by 560 feet. Two sides are formed by five barracks, three log and two frame; one (log, shingle-roof) 145 by 27 feet, with wings of 87 by 20 feet; one (frame, shingle-roof, unoccupied, and out of repair) 108 by 27 feet, with a wing of 69 by 20 feet; one, (log, shingle-roof, unoccupied) 114 by 27 feet, with wing 69 by 20 feet; one, (frame, shingle-roof) 147 by 27 feet, with wing of 69 by 20 feet, and another (log, shingle-roof) 132 by 30 feet, with no wing. Each building contains eighteen windows, and compartments used as dormitories, orderly-rooms, dining and cooking rooms. The dormitories are ceiled. Average air-space per man in two buildings occupied at present is 698 cubic feet. Single iron

bedsteads are used. Ventilation is by windows and roof-ventilators.

One side is occupied by officers' quarters—frame, lathed, and plastered, with shingle-roofs—in good repair. Three shingle buildings, 42 by 20 feet; four double, 54 by 20 feet; one commanding officer's, 65 by 24 feet. Two single buildings, 40 by 20 feet, are on a line with hospital, in the rear of the main line of officers' quarters. All have kitchens, 24 by 15 feet.

The fourth side is occupied by the adjutant's office, (new) 41 by 30 feet; quartermaster's office (new), 36 by 30 feet; the commissary storehouse, (new) 96 by 25 feet; and the band quarters, (new) 52 by 22 feet, with wing 90 by 19 feet.

In the rear of the barracks are the quartermaster's warehouse (log), 132 by 30 feet; the forage building (log), 130 by 27 feet; and six laundresses' houses (five log and one frame); two, 40 by 24 feet; one, 30 by 15 feet; one, 40 by 18 feet, with wing 24 by 15 feet; one, 60 by 18 feet; one, 30 by 15 feet, with wing 12 by 15 feet; also, the cavalry stables, log with shingle-roofs; four, 200 by 30 feet; and one, 235 by 30 feet.

A new guard-house was erected in 1874. It is built of logs, 42 by 18 feet, and 9 feet high from floor to ceiling, and contains, besides a guard-room, ten single cells, each 6 by 3 feet, and one double cell, 6 by 6 feet. There is no general prison-room. Ventilation is sufficient.

The post-bakery (log) is 45 by 30 feet, with large oven.

The hospital is a log building, well chinked and plastered, with lathed and plastered ceilings and shingle-roof. It consists of a main building 69 by 20 feet, and a wing 56 by 20 feet, forming an "L."

The two ward-rooms, respectively 20 by 38 feet and 20 by 20 feet, will accommodate twenty-four patients, giving to each 466 cubic feet air-space. The dispensary is 20 by 12 feet, the steward's room 10 by 20 feet, and the dining-room and store-room are each 20 feet square. The washroom, 8½ by 15 feet, adjoins the larger ward. The steward's quarters have a kitchen, 14 by 20 feet, adjoining. The hospital kitchen, 16 by 20 feet, communicates with the dining-room in the wing of the building. An addition of a post-mortem room has been made.

There is no post library; but two company libraries, one containing 362 volumes, the other 26 volumes.

The bathing facilities are good in company quarters; the river, however, is preferable in summer. No post or company order for compulsory and systematic bathing has been issued.

Quartermaster and commissary stores are obtained from the depots

at Omaha, two hundred and eighty-six miles, by means of the railroad and wagons from McPherson Station. They are in good condition when received and kept so in storehouses as above.

Mails from the east and west are received every morning. No endemic diseases; an epidemic of typhoid fever is recorded in October, November, and December, 1872.

APPENDIX C

REPORTS AND ORDERS PERTAINING TO THE FORT

General Orders No. 17.

- I. Paragraph III of General Order No. 1 Sept. 27, 1863 of these H. D. Quarters is hereby revoked.
- II. This post shall be called Fort Cottonwood until further ordered from and after this date.
- III. A reservation for military purposes is hereby established bounded as follows: To-wit, commencing on a point on the military road two miles in a southeasterly direction from the flagstaff situated in the center of the parade ground—thence North to the Platte river, thence up the Platte river four miles—thence South to a point on the military road two miles in a northwesterly direction from the aforesaid flagstaff—thence along said road in a northwesterly direction eight miles—thence south fifteen miles—thence east twenty miles—thence North fifteen miles—thence in a northwesterly direction eight miles to the place of beginning. [Signed] Major George M. O'Brien
Major 7th Iowa Cav.
Commanding Post.

Special Orders }
No. 122 } Headquarters, District of Nebraska Omaha,
 } Nebr. Terr., Nov. 29, 1864.

Subject to the approval of the War Department, reservations for military purposes are hereby declared and established, with locations and boundaries as follows:

Cottonwood Springs, Nebr. Terr., Commencing at the flagstaff in the center of the parade ground at the post, thence east three miles, thence north three miles, thence west six miles, thence south three miles, thence west twelve miles, thence south fifteen miles, thence east thirty miles, thence north fifteen—thence west twelve miles to a point three miles east of the place of beginning. Julesburg, Colo. Terr., commencing at a point in the center of the parade ground at such post, thence east four miles, thence north four miles, thence west eight miles, thence north four miles to a point four miles east of the beginning.

The military commanders at the posts of Cottonwood Springs, Nebr., Terr., and Julesburg, Colo. Terr., will exercise the requisite supervision over the territory comprised in the boundaries designated, preventing all cutting of wood or timber and all camping or grazing with the limits named in this order. These reservations are required for the purpose of procuring and retaining for the use of the troops necessarily placed at the points named the necessary supplies of fuel and forage for their use and for the purpose of exercising the requisite jurisdiction in the vicinity of these posts. All persons who had prior to the issuing of General Orders No. 17, headquarters Fort Cottonwood, May 18, 1864, made actual settlement and established a claim upon territory comprised within the limits of the reservation and described herein, will be allowed to retain 160 acres and will also be permitted to graze their stock within the reservation, subject to rules and regulations to be made by the cammandants at the posts named. The stage company will also be allowed to retain their buildings and the grounds contiguous thereto and necessary for the keeping of such station at Julesburg, Colo. Terr., all persons found trespassing within the limits of these reservations will be tried before a military commission.

By command of Robert B. Mitchell.

Brig. General.

John Pratt, Ass't Adj-Gen.

General Orders	}	Headquarters Dept. of the Platte.
No. 66		Omaha, Neb., Dec. 17, 1869.

The reservation of Fort McPherson, Nebr., is hereby announced as follows:

Commencing at a point one mile due south of the flagstaff in the center of the Parade Ground, thence two miles due east, thence due north to the north bank of the Platte River, thence westerly along said north bank to the meridian until it strikes the parallel one mile south of the flagstaff, thence east along said parallel to the point of beginning.

By command of Bvt. Maj-Gen'l. Augur

[Signed] Geo. D. Ruggles

A. A. General

General Orders	}	Headquarters Fort McPherson, Nebr.
No. 6		February 20, 1870

The following is an additional reservation declared in Dept. Order

No. 76 Series 1869 for the Post of Fort McPherson, Nebr., subject to the approval of the Dept. Commander.

One hundred feet on either side of the head of the bridge along the inner bank, the present northern boundary of the reserve, thence five hundred (feet) in a line parallel to a line drawn from the head of the bridge towards McPherson Station.

By order of General Emory,

[Signed] W. C. Forbush

Lieut. & Adj. 5th U. S. Cavalry

Special Orders)
No. 18) Headquarters Fort McPherson, Nebr.
) June 15, 1871

Pursuant to orders from the War Department this day received on and after the 18th instance no person except the Post Trader will be allowed to trade, peddle, or sell goods, by sample or otherwise, within the limits of this reserve and in order that these instructions may be strictly complied with and to avoid evasion of the order by shutting the front door and dealing from the rear on and after this date no officer, enlisted man, or civilian in the employ of the Government will be permitted to visit the places of trade on this reserve except the Post Trader under penalty of disobedience.

By order of W. H. Emory

[Signed] By W. C. Forbush

Lieut. & Adjt.

War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, I, Vol. XLI, Part 1, (1893) Report No. 2, pp. 825-832.

Headquarters Eastern Sub-Division of Nebraska

Fort Kearny, Nebr. Ter., November 1, 1864

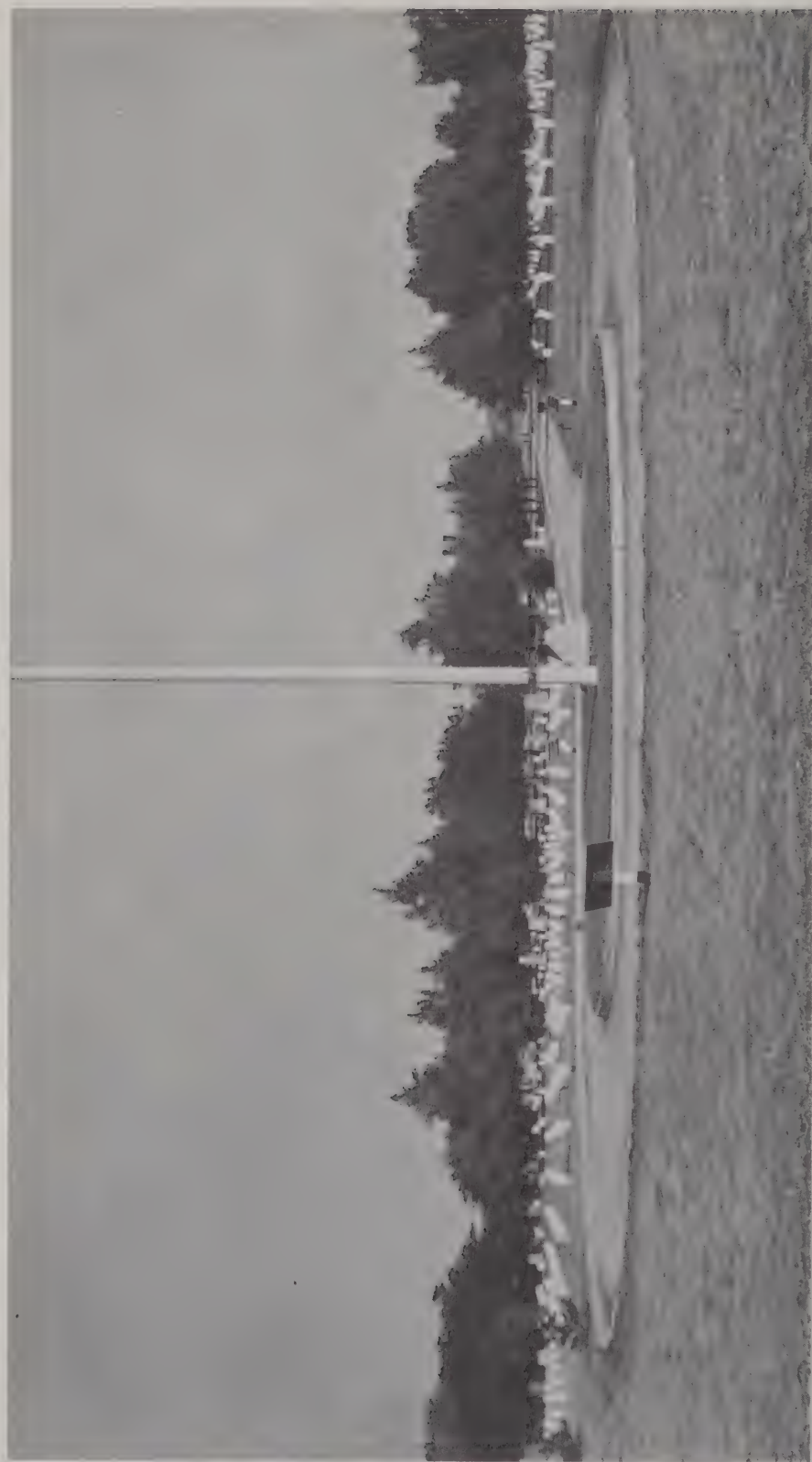
Sir: I have the honor respectfully to submit the following report of military operations in this sub-district since I assumed command on the 29th September last, in obedience to Special Field Orders, No. 2, dated at Fort Kearny, Nebr. Ter., September, 1864:

On the 26th day of September I arrived at this post with the command, which moved from here with me on the 28th August, 1864, under orders of Major General S. R. Curtis, after marching 800 miles in search of hostile Indians along the waters of the Republican and Solomon Rivers. On the 29th September, 1864, I was ordered to assume command of the Eastern Sub-District of Nebraska, comprising a territory of 400 miles of country from the Missouri River to and including Julesburg, Colo. Ter., through which the several roads from Leavenworth, Atchison, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, and Omaha, converging at and a little east of this post, continued west, forming the Great Overland Mail Route to Salt Lake, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada and California. The troops placed at my disposal consisted of one battalion



FIFTH CAVALRY AT FORT WINGATE, NEW MEXICO, AFTER LEAVING FORT MCPHERSON

Nebraska State Historical Society



FORT MCPHERSON NATIONAL CEMETERY, 1940
Nebraska State Historical Society

Seventh Iowa Cavalry Volunteers, one battalion Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, the veteran portion of my own regiment, and four companies of Nebraska militia, together with thirteen pieces of artillery, giving an aggregate of 971 men and thirteen pieces of artillery.* * *

At Fort Cottonwood, Nebr. Ter., distant fifteen miles from Gillman's Station, Col. S. W. Summers, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, commanding, one company of Seventh Iowa Cavalry Volunteers, one company Battalion Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, and six pieces of artillery, numbering 100 men present.* * *

The posts of Fort Kearny and Fort Cottonwood being the only military posts heretofore existing on this long line of communication between the Missouri River and the States and Territories west of it previous to this time, the supplies at these posts having been to a great extent exhausted by the troops composing the expedition which started from here under command of Major Gen. S. R. Curtis on the 28th August, a large proportion of which were troops from Kansas, and the season of the year being far advanced at the time I assumed command, I found myself in a great measure thrown on my own resources in supplying these numerous posts with quarters, defenses, hay and fuel. The public transportation being altogether inadequate to the wants of the command, fuel and logs for building purposes having to be hauled in some instances seventy-five miles, I instructed my post commandants to press the empty teams of freighters returning from the west to assist them in erecting defenses, hauling fuel, building logs, and hay, and also directed them to press mowing machines into public service, and without delay put up such amount of hay as would be required for winter consumption.* * *

At Cottonwood commodious buildings are arranged in rectangular form about parade grounds, giving accommodations for 200 men and stabling in rear of quarters for 178 horses, the whole enclosed by a stockade five feet high along eastern, western, and northern fronts, the southern face having a stockade nine feet high. Additional buildings are about completed for 100 more men. A good hospital, quartermaster, and commissary building have been erected at this post, of cedar logs—the principal ones of hewed logs—the company quarters of round logs.* * *

In addition to the work enumerated in the foregoing details of each post, guards have been furnished the Overland Mail Company stages daily each way from Little Blue Station, Nebr. Ter., to Julesburg, Colo. Ter., each guard being relieved at the next post. At one time last month so audacious had the Indians become in their raids, that a mounted escort of one sergeant and ten men had to be furnished to the stage from Plum Creek to Cottonwood, each post relieving the escort. All the hay cut by the troops of this command was cut by them under arms, and the detail ordered to procure wood were not infrequently driven out of the canyons where alone it can be procured by superior forces of Indians, and no wagons used by the troops of this sub-district were permitted to go any distance from their post without a strong guard to protect them. Add to this duty the daily and nightly patrols along the overland route and the constant reconnaissance made by detachments from each post, often extending their operations 60 to 100 miles on either side of the Platte Valley, and the amount of service performed, with a view of protecting the overland mail route, and the many thousands of wagons laden with supplies for the Territories west of the Missouri, which have lately passed over it in perfect security, and some idea of the activity of this command can be arrived at.* * *

On the 22nd of October, last, the wind being from the north and favorable, I caused the prairie south of Platte River Valley to be simultaneously fired from a point 20 miles west of Julesburg continuously to a point 10 miles east of this post, burning the grass in a continuous line of 200 miles as far south as the Republican River. In some places the fire went out owing to the grass being too thin to burn readily. But since then detachments have been sent out and the work has progressed favorably; every canyon and all the valleys of streams along this line have been thoroughly burned, thus depriving hostile Indians of forage for their animals in their hiding places and driving all the game beyond the Republican River. From a point 10 miles east of this post to Little Blue Station I have burned only the creek valleys and canyons, compelling the Indians to graze their stock on the high prairie if they remain in that part of the country, and leaving the game in that section undisturbed for the use of the Pawnees, who received twelve sacks of flour from this post on the 29th October last and started for the hunting grounds between Little Blue and Republican Rivers about 200 strong. * * *

I cannot conclude without expressing my admiration of the soldierly behavior of the four companies of Nebraska militia under my command. They have endured privations and done duty without murmuring, only one company, Captain Stevenson's, having manifested any disorderly conduct and that was promptly remedied by Col. O. P. Mason, Nebraska militia. Their services entitle them to the thanks of their fellow citizens, and the Territory may justly feel proud of such gallant men.

I am, general, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

[Signed] R. R. Livingston,
Colonel First Regt. Nebraska Cav. Veteran Vols.,
Commanding Eastern Sub-District of Nebraska.

Brig. Gen. Lorenze Thomas

Adjutant Gen., War Dept., Washington, D. C.

War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, I, Vol. XLI, Part 1, (1893) Report No. 2. Lieutenant Thomas Flanagan, Sixteenth Kansas Cavalry, pp. 845-849.

Fort Cottonwood: This post is the depot of supplies for the following named posts: Dan Smith's Station, Gillman's Station, Fort Morrow, O'Fallon's Bluffs, Alkali Station, Beauvais Station, and Julesburg, and has ample store room for supplies for twelve months. The quartermaster buildings are excellent and in good condition. At present they are greatly in need of quartermaster stores and clothing. Captain King, commissary of subsistence and acting assistant quartermaster, having made his estimates and forwarded them some time ago, has been informed that they are being filled and stores are now on the way. The supply of grain at this post is sufficient for this and the posts mentioned for two months and contract made for a further supply, not completed. The supply of hay already secured is sufficient for winter's use and is of good quality, Captain King having complied with instructions from district quartermaster's office instructing him to purchase all the hay in the vicinity of Fort Cottonwood. Arrangements are made to keep up the supply of fuel for the winter, having it cut by the troops and hauled by public and private transportation (of the latter four teams are hired). Sufficient fuel can be collected from

3 to 7 miles from this post. There are five Government teams at this post for hauling wood and other post purposes. The stabling is only sufficient for the cavalry horses now stationed here, leaving the quartermaster's animals exposed to the weather. A sufficient number of logs, however, have been purchased to build a quartermaster stable—is in course of erection and will soon be completed. Fresh beef is furnished this post by contract, is supplied when required, and is of good quality. Twenty-six wagons of subsistence stores are on the way from and left Omaha on the 15th ultimo. Fort Cottonwood is destitute of blacksmith's, wagonmaker's, and saddler's shops, not having been furnished with the necessary tools. Estimates have been made for them and as soon as received shops will be commenced, which are indispensable to this and dependent posts.

Fort Morrow: Troops at this station received their supplies from Fort Cottonwood, the same as troops stationed at that place. Fuel can be procured at a short distance.

Fort O'Fallon's Bluffs is supplied from Fort Cottonwood. Quarters for troops and stabling are well arranged and in good condition. Full supply of hay secured; 300 tons put up by contract awarded by district quartermaster. Supply of fuel arranged is cut by troops detailed and hauled by transportation hired; distance, thirty miles. One six-mule team for post service, etc. at this post. Tools for blacksmith and saddler's shop complete and in good working order. Fresh beef supplied by contractor, Mr. John Morrow.

Post at Alkali receives supplies from Fort Cottonwood. Quarters for troops completed and in comfortable condition. Officers' quarters and quartermaster building will soon be completed. One thousand feet of lumber are required at this post to complete stables, quarter, etc., none being on hand at Fort Kearny. I have the necessary order for it to be purchased and forwarded. Supply of hay for winter's use secured, having been purchased by contract. This post is destitute of fuel, having to haul it 60 miles. The commanding officer informed me that fuel could not be procured at present less than \$47.00 a cord. Troops are stationed at the ranch of Mr. Beauvais and no Government buildings have been put up.

Julesburg: This post receives supplies from Fort Cottonwood, but an estimate was made direct on department quartermaster, which is now being filled and stores are on the way. The men's quarters at this post are not completed, one of the building not being covered, the poles have to be hauled a distance of 75 to 80 miles. Captain O'Brien, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, is using every exertion to complete his quarters and stables and make them comfortable as soon as possible. Corn is supplied by contract and is promptly forwarded. A sufficient supply of hay is secured. Fuel cut by enlisted men and hauled by hired teams. Commanding officer can keep up a supply in this way. One post team on hand at the post. Fresh beef supplied by contractor, Mr. Morrow.

The posts at Fort Kearny and Cottonwood during the past three months have been very badly supplied, causing the troops to suffer more or less for the want of necessary clothing. In some cases for the want of boots men have been compelled to purchase moccasins, and other articles of clothing that have been worn out (on account of the large portion of fatigue duty to be performed in erecting and establishing new stations on the route) cannot be replaced for want of stores. The supply of commissary stores could not be kept up, and the troops in some instances could

not procure the full rations, and this, when some of the men were working hard building quarters, procuring fuel, etc., and exposes to severe weather. On account of stores not having been forwarded promptly on estimates, and the store-houses being empty, quartermasters have been compelled to take stores from trains destined to posts west of here.

At Forts Kearny and Cottonwood, the storerooms are good and sufficient for at least nine months' supplies for the respective and dependent posts, and I would respectfully ask, why stores estimated for have not been forwarded. Fresh beef is furnished Fort Kearny by Mr. Boyd, contractor; is of good quality and delivered when required.* * * Estimates for six months' supplies have been made out and transmitted previously, and the amount forwarded on the estimate should be deducted from the accompanying. In my estimate of the 9th of October I asked for 36 mule teams. I would again respectfully urge that they be forwarded as soon as practicable, as they would be of vital importance and the greatest relief to the various posts of this sub-district in forwarding supplies, procuring fuel, etc.

Trusting that the stores asked for on the accompanying estimates will be forwarded promptly,

I am, lieutenant, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Charles Thompson

Lieut., First Nebr. Cav. Vet., Vols.
and A.A.Q.M., A.C.S.

Lieut. F. A. McDonald,
First Nebr. Cav. Vet. Vols., Actg. Asst. Adjt. Gen.
Eastern Sub-Dist. of Nebr. Ter., Fort Kearny.

APPENDIX D

ORDERS PERTAINING TO OVERLAND MAILS

Special Orders } Headquarters Department of the Mississippi
No. 79 } Saint Louis, April 7, 1862

Brigadier-General James Craig is assigned to duty in the District of Kansas for duty on the Overland Mail Route. He will report to Brigadier-General Sturgis at Fort Leavenworth.

By order of H. W. Halleck
J. C. Kelton
Assistant Adjutant-General

General Orders } Headquarters District of Kansas
No. 6 } Fort Leavenworth, April 16, 1862

- I. Brigadier-General James Craig, having reported to these headquarters for duty, is assigned to the command of all troops in the vicinity of the Overland Mail Route from its eastern termination to the western boundary of this District.
- II. As it is of utmost importance that the overland mail should be uninterrupted, General Craig will enter at once upon his duties, and will take such measures as will insure ample protection to said mail company and their property against Indians or other depredators. He will establish his headquarters at Fort Kearny or Fort Laramie, as he may hereafter judge expedient for carrying out the requirements of this order.

By order of Brigadier-General
S. D. Sturgis
Thomas Moonlight
Captain, Light Artillery,
Kansas Vols. and A. A. A. G.

PROCLAMATION

Headquarters District of Kansas
Fort Leavenworth, April 18, 1862

The importance of keeping open the communication between the Government and the States on the Pacific, and the territories and mili-

tary posts situated between, renders the overland mail a military necessity. All property, therefore, of the overland mail company (such as horses, mules, harness, carriages, etc.) necessary for the regular carrying of said mail is hereby exempted from civil process. All persons are hereby cautioned against interfering with said mail, on any pretense whatever, on pain of being arrested and tried by a military commission.

S. D. Sturgis,
Brigadier-General
Commanding.

Special Orders }
No. 64 } War Department, Adjutant-General's Office
 } Washington, November 29, 1862

XI. Brigadier-General James Craig will proceed without delay to Omaha, Nebraska Territory, where he will establish headquarters of the District of Nebraska.

By command of Major-General Curtis
H. Z. Curtis, Asst. Adj. Gen.

Fort Laramie
July 10, 1862

Brigadier-General Blunt, Commanding

Under orders from Post Office Department the mail company are removing their stages and stock from the North Platte, Sweetwater and South Pass to a route 100 miles south.

I am furnishing small escorts for the property and men. The emigration now passing principally family trains and need protection.

The telegraph line cannot be kept up if troops all leave the line. I regard a war with the Indians inevitable unless Government is willing to abandon the road, both for mail and emigrants. I am satisfied that white men are leading the Indians.

I start a messenger to you tomorrow with details. In meantime let me hear if you approve my keeping portion of my command on this road until emigration passes and protect the telegraph.

James Craig
Brigadier-General

General James G. Blunt
Fort Leavenworth

Headquarters Fort Laramie
July 11, 1862

General: I am in receipt today of a dispatch informing me that the Postmaster-General has ordered the Overland Mail Company to abandon the North Platte and Sweetwater portion of the route and

remove their property to a route south of this running through Bridger's Pass. As I feel uncertain as to my duty, and as the stages and stock now being concentrated preparatory to removal, I have thought proper to send Lieut. Wilcox, 4th U. S. Cavalry, with this letter. My instructions require me to protect the overland mail route along the telegraph line, and the emigration not mentioned. I have up to this time directed my attention to the protection of all of these.

James Craig.

Headquarters Department of Kansas
Fort Leavenworth, July 20, 1862

Brigadier-General James Craig

Commanding Troops on Overland Mail Route

Sir: Your dispatch of the 10th instant, by the hand of Lieutenant Wilcox, was received on the 16th. . . . You will have to use your own judgment as to your ability to protect both the mail route (as it is now changed) and the telegraph line. I am fearful that the removal of the mail route will increase the difficulty, as it will give the Indians confidence of success in their enterprise. As the emigrant season is about over protection for them will not be much longer needed, and if sufficient protection cannot be given those now passing, you will send them back.

James G. Blunt

Brigadier-General Commanding

Hon. E. M. Stanton

Secretary of War

Fort Laramie, Aug. 23, 1862

My department commander is in the field and I cannot communicate with him. Indians, from Minnesota to Pike's Peak, and from Salt Lake to Fort Kearny, committing depredations. I have only about 500 troops, scattered on the telegraph and overland mail lines.

James Craig

Brigadier-General Commanding

APPENDIX E

SUMMIT SPRINGS RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, by the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, that the thanks of the people of Nebraska, be and are hereby tendered to Brevet Major-General Carr and the officers and soldiers under his command of the 5th U. S. Cavalry for their heroic courage and perseverance in their campaign against hostile Indians on the frontier of this State in July, 1869, driving the enemy from our borders and achieving a victory at Summit Springs, Colorado Territory, by which the people of the State were freed from the ravages of merciless savages.

2d. RESOLVED, That the thanks of this body and of the people of the State of Nebraska, are hereby also tendered to Major Frank J. North and the officers and soldiers under his command of the "Pawnee scouts" for the manner in which they have assisted in driving hostile Indians from our frontier settlements.

3d. RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State is hereby instructed to transmit a copy of the foregoing resolutions to Major-General Eugene A. Carr and Major Frank J. North. Approved, February 28, 1870.

APPENDIX F

RESOLUTIONS FOR MILITARY AND FINANCIAL AID

WHEREAS, The settlers in Jefferson and other counties in that portion of southwestern Nebraska, have been for several years past, greatly annoyed by depredations of Indians who have murdered men, carried off women and children and stolen nearly all the horses in some portions of these counties, and,

WHEREAS, The Indians are still threatening raids upon the border settlement of southwestern Nebraska, thereby preventing the same from settlement, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Representatives of the people of Nebraska, in Legislature assembled, do most earnestly solicit General Augur, commander of this District, to give us all the protection possible, to our exposed settlements, and we do recommend that a military post be established on the Republican River in Nebraska, at or near some point south from Fort Kearny, believing this will give assurance of safety and encourage settlement in a region already depopulated by the Indian war.

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be, and is hereby, instructed to transmit a copy of this joint resolution to Gen. Augur, commander of this district. Approved, February 26, 1870.

APPENDIX G

RESOLUTION REGARDING RESERVATIONS

WHEREAS, The Indians now on special reservations in Nebraska, hold and occupy valuable and important tracts of land, which while thus occupied will not be developed and improved; and,

WHEREAS, The demand for lands which will be improved and made useful, are such that these Indian lands should no longer thus be held, but should be allowed to pass into the hands of enterprising and industrious citizens; and,

WHEREAS, We deny the so-called original rights of the aborigines to the soil and endorse and sustain the action of our representatives in Congress in his efforts to abolish the so-called Indian title to the public domain, and further that the condition of the Indian would be better for himself and all concerned by a change of present relations and concentrating all tribes, where they may be the better afforded the facilities of education and agricultural development; therefore,

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, That we urge upon our delegation in Congress, to secure the removal of all Indians, now on special reservations in Nebraska to other more congenial and advantageous localities, where their presence will not retard settlements by the whites and where a policy of the general government towards them in the capacity of wards, may be the better exemplified.

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and is hereby requested to furnish the President of the United States, Secretary of the Interior, and our Senators and Representatives in Congress, each, with certified copies of this preamble and joint resolution. Approved, March 2, 1870.

APPENDIX H

RESOLUTION FOR CAPTAIN JAMES MURIE

WHEREAS, In the month of August, 1867, Captain James Murie, commanding Co. A, Pawnee Scouts, consisting of 48 men, engaged, and routed one hundred and fifty men, belonging to the Cheyenne Indians, under Turkey Foot, their chief. Captain James Murie and his men killed fifteen and captured two Indians, one being the son of Turkey Foot. These two prisoners were saved from instant death by the bravery and courage of the said Capt. James Murie, he desiring to hold them as hostages for the exchange of some white prisoners, held by the Cheyennes.

A council of the Indians was subsequently held at North Platte, at which council Lieutenant General W. T. Sherman was present.

WHEREAS, It appears that said council was successful in exchanging the two Indians, (captured by Capt. James Murie), for six white women that had been captured from the settlements on the Platte River, and were restored to their respective families. The excessive scouting and exposure incurred all through this campaign, very seriously impaired the health of said James Murie, Capt. of Pawnee Scouts, Co. A. Said Capt. Murie was again called out on the first day of April, 1869, and on the first day of July, of the same year, received what was supposed to be sunstroke, but which proved to be insanity, superinduced by the exposure of several Indian campaigns through which said Capt. Murie had passed.

WHEREAS, Said Captain Murie has been, and now is an inmate of the Insane Asylum, having a wife and three small children totally unprovided for; and as no provision is made under any of the Military Regulations, whereby a pension or half pay can be claimed for service in the Indian campaigns on the western frontier for any person or officer belonging to companies composed of Indians; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEBRASKA, That in view of the distressed condition of the family of said Capt. James Murie, and his total incapacity to support them, we do most earnestly request our Senators and Representatives in Congress, to use their influence to obtain such relief as they may deem just and proper, for the family of the said Captain James Murie, Co. A., Pawnee Scouts, and that a certified copy of this resolution be sent to our Senators and Representatives in Congress. Approved, March 24th A. D. 1871.

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTION FARMER RELIEF

WHEREAS, On the 17th day of May, A. D. 1870, William I. Thaine, a peaceable and quiet farmer, whilst engaged in plowing on his homestead, in Nuckols County, Nebraska, was attacked by a band of Sioux Indians, and killed, and his property, consisting of four horses, harness, flour, bacon, and other necessities of life, amounting in the aggregate, to the sum of eight hundred and eighty dollars (\$880.00) appropriated and taken away, thereby leaving a widow and eight small children almost destitute, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEBRASKA, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress, be requested to use their best endeavors, in procuring a speedy adjustment of the claim of Mrs. Ardelia Thaine, against the government of the United States, on account of said Indian depredations.

RESOLVED, That the Hon. Secretary of State is hereby instructed to transmit a certified copy of this joint resolution to the Hon. P. W. Hitchcock, Hon. Thomas W. Tipton, and the Hon. Jon Taffe, our Senators and Representatives in Congress and also to the Hon. Columbus Delano, Secretary of the Interior. Approved, March 9th, A. D. 1871.

APPENDIX J

Office of the Superintendent FORT McPHERSON NATIONAL CEMETERY MAXWELL, NEBRASKA

Superintendents of Fort McPherson National Cemetery.

	From	To
George Griffith.....	No date	No date
Thomas Ridgely.....	1/30/74	2/10/74
Thomas Mulcaney.....	2/10/74	6/14/76
George A. Haverfield.....	6/14/76	8/15/77
P. J. O'Rourke.....	8/15/77	1/20/85
J. J. O'Rourke (Acting).....	1/20/85	11/ 4/85
Benjamin F. Baker.....	11/ 4/85	2/12/92
George W. Allen.....	2/12/92	10/10/95
Ludwig Baege.....	10/10/95	8/ 6/97
Lorenzo H. Dow.....	8/ 6/97	5/29/04
C. B. May.....	5/29/04	5/10/05
Lorenzo H. Dow.....	5/10/05	4/27/09
Benjamin F. Baker.....	4/28/09	10/31/09
E. T. Ingle.....	11/ 1/09	5/10/14
John Harrigon.....	5/10/14	11/ 1/15
Mart Howe.....	11/ 1/15	5/10/18
William Houser (Acting).....	5/10/18	7/ 7/18
Leonard A. Heil.....	7/ 7/18	6/20/20
John McCarthy.....	6/20/20	4/ 7/21
Othello O. H. Weidner.....	4/ 7/21	11/28/26
Frank V. Fehl (Acting).....	12/ 1/26	2/15/27
George L. Snider.....	2/15/27	8/31/27
Elmer Chase (Acting).....	9/ 1/27	2/16/28
James W. Dell (Acting).....	2/16/28	1/29/29
Elmer Chase (Acting).....	1/29/29	2/ 9/29
John W. Moss.....	2/ 9/29	9/25/30
Elmer Chase (Acting).....	9/25/30	1/22/31
Charles E. Wingert.....	1/22/31	5/31/37
Clarence H. Otis.....	6/ 1/37	5/16/39
Charles O. Gruel.....	5/16/39	6/10/43
Dorman B. Hall (Acting).....	6/16/43	10/16/43
Thomas O. Moore.....	10/17/43	9/22/44
Hans P. Larson (Acting).....	9/22/44	1/16/45
Edward J. Larkin.....	1/16/45	10/30/45
Dorman B. Hall (Acting).....	10/30/45	4/19/46
John Neukirch.....	4/19/46	2/ 1/57
William F. Spivey.....	2/ 1/57	8/21/60
James D. Simms.....	8/25/60	To date

APPENDIX K

Office of the Superintendent
FORT McPHERSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MAXWELL, NEBRASKA

27 November 1952

Bodies were received from other Army Post Cemeteries for re-interment in Fort McPherson National Cemetery, in the following order:

Fort Sedgwick, Colorado.....	1891
Fort Kearny, Nebraska.....	1890
Fort McPherson, Nebraska.....	1892
Fort Halleck, Wyoming.....	December, 1878
Fort Hartsuff, Nebraska.....	November, 1881
Fort Sanders, Wyoming.....	May 4, 1883
Fort Fetterman, Wyoming.....	May 4, 1883
Fort Hall, Idaho.....	May 19, 1883
Camp White River, Colorado.....	January 8, 1887
Independence Rock, Wyoming.....	January 11, 1888
Fort Bridger, Wyoming.....	May 29, 1891
Fort Laramie, Wyoming.....	June 13, 1891
Fort Hale, South Dakota.....	July 30, 1891
Fort Crawford, Colorado.....	December 4, 1891
Fort Lewis, Colorado.....	December 10, 1891
Fort Steele, Wyoming.....	April 8, 1892
LaBonte P. O., Wyoming.....	May 26, 1896
Fort Atkinson, Nebraska.....	March, 1905
Old South Pass, Wyoming.....	March 16, 1907
Baggs, Wyoming.....	June, 1909
Fort Mitchell, Nebraska.....	July, 1915
Fort Sidney, Nebraska.....	August 10, 1922
Fort Robinson, Nebraska.....	July 22, 1947

[Signed] John Neukirch,
Superintendent

APPENDIX L

COMMANDING OFFICERS OF FORT McPHERSON

This appendix contains the chronological list of the officers who served in the capacity of Commanding Officer at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, during its existence from 1863 to 1880.

The list of Commanding Officers from September, 1863, until 1869 is more complete than the list from 1869 to 1880. The reason for this is the Assistant Surgeon U. S. A., A. D. Wilson, Post Surgeon, included the former list in his Post Medical Records while he was stationed at Fort McPherson. In his list he includes the actual dates of command of each officer. The Post Returns which were used to obtain the remainder of the Commanding Officers merely lists the name, rank, and organization of the person commanding and does not give the dates that they were installed and relieved of command.

In this appendix the reader will find that some officers seemed to alternate command month by month. This is particularly apparent in the case of N. A. M. Dudley. The reason for his frequent relief from command as well as others is that they were frequently called away to serve on Court Martial cases and command was usually taken over by the Senior Officer present who signed the monthly return.

Major George M. O'Brien, Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, was the first man to command Fort McPherson. He commanded from September 27, 1863, until he was relieved of command by Colonel S. W. Summers, Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, September 28, 1864.

Colonel S. W. Summers, Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, commanded the fort from September 28, 1864, until he was relieved by Captain Charles F. Porter, First Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, on January 14, 1865.

Captain Charles F. Porter, First Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, commanded Fort McPherson from January 14, 1865, until relieved by Major George M. O'Brien on February 11, 1865.

Major George M. O'Brien, Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, remained in command from February 11, 1865, until relieved by Lieutenant-Colonel William Baumer, First Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, on August 4, 1865.

Lieutenant-Colonel William Baumer, First Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, remained in command of the fort until September 16, 1865,

when he was relieved by Major Thomas J. Majors, First Nebraska Veteran Cavalry

Major Thomas J. Majors, First Nebraska Veteran Cavalry, commanded the post until December 24, 1865, at which time he was relieved by Lieutenant-Colonel R. E. Fleming, Sixth West Virginia Veteran Volunteer Cavalry

Lieutenant-Colonel R. E. Fleming, Sixth West Virginia Veteran Volunteer Cavalry, remained in command of the post from December 24, 1865, until relieved by Major Henry Norton, Sixth U. S. Volunteer Infantry, on April 5, 1866.

Major Henry Norton, Sixth U. S. Volunteer Infantry, commanded from April 5, 1866, until succeeded on or about July 14, 1866, by Captain Bvt. Lieutenant-Colonel J. K. Mizner, Second U. S. Cavalry.

Captain Bvt. Lieutenant-Colonel J. K. Mizner, Second U. S. Cavalry, commanded from about July 14, 1866, until relieved by Colonel Henry B. Carrington, Eighteenth U. S. Infantry, on March 4, 1867.

Colonel Henry B. Carrington, Eighteenth U. S. Infantry, commanded from March 4, 1867, until relieved June 29, 1867, by Captain Bvt. Colonel, U. S. A., D. R. Ransom, Third U. S. Artillery.

Captain Bvt. Colonel, U. S. A., D. R. Ransom, Third U. S. Artillery, commanded from June 29, 1867, until Captain Bvt. Colonel D. R. Ransom, Third U. S. Artillery, reassumed command October 16, 1867.

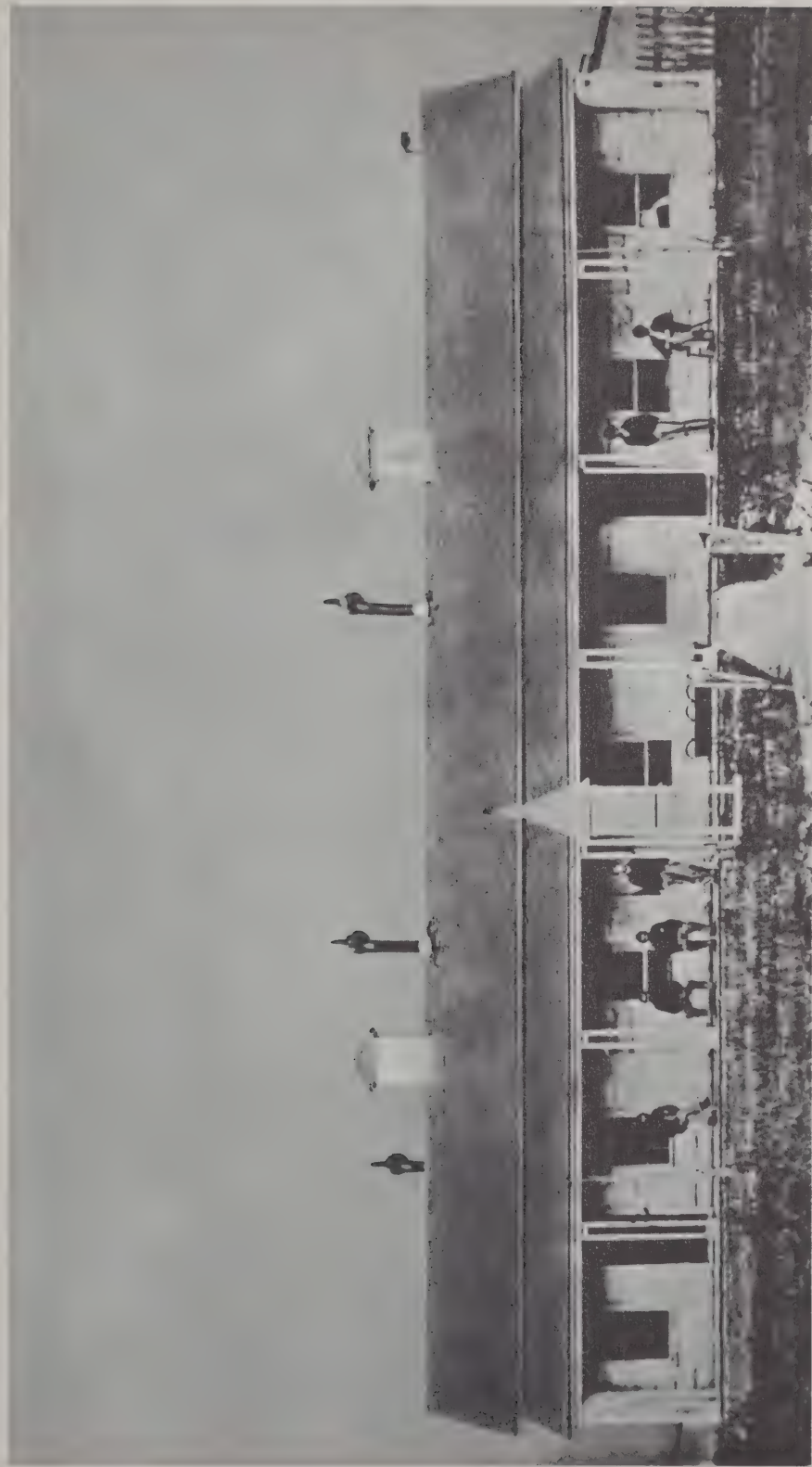
Captain Bvt. Colonel D. R. Ransom, Third U. S. Artillery, commanded from October 16, 1867, until December 8, 1867, when Lieutenant-Colonel, Bvt. Brigadier-General I. N. Palmer, Second U. S. Cavalry assumed command.

Lieutenant-Colonel, Bvt. Brigadier-General I. N. Palmer, Second U. S. Cavalry, served as commander from December 8, 1867, until Colonel T. F. Wood, Bvt. Major-General, Second U. S. Cavalry assumed command December 18, 1867.

Colonel, Bvt. Major-General T. F. Wood, Second U. S. Cavalry, served as commander from December 18, 1867, until General I. N. Palmer, Second U. S. Cavalry, reassumed command January 18, 1868.

General I. N. Palmer, Second U. S. Cavalry, commanded from January 18, 1868, until relieved by Major George W. Howland, Second U. S. Cavalry, July 13, 1868.

Major George W. Howland, Second U. S. Cavalry, commanded Fort McPherson from July 13, 1868, until relieved of command by Lieutenant-Colonel, Bvt. Colonel A. G. Brackett, Second U. S. Cavalry, on March 20, 1869.



ONE OF THE BARRACKS AT FORT MCPHERSON

Warren Doolittle Collection



ARRIVAL OF A COURIER
Century Magazine

J. H. B. SPRING 1864

Lieutenant-Colonel, Bvt. Colonel A. G. Brackett, Second U. S. Cavalry, commanded from March 20, 1869, until relieved by Lieutenant-Colonel, Bvt. Brigadier-General Thomas Duncan, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, in May, 1869.

Lieutenant-Colonel, Bvt. Brigadier-General Thomas Duncan, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, commanded from May, 1869, until July, 1869, when he was succeeded by Colonel, Bvt. Major-General W. H. Emory, Fifth U. S. Cavalry.

Colonel, Bvt. Major-General W. H. Emory, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, commanded from July, 1869, until May, 1870, when he was relieved by Major, Bvt. Major-General E. A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry.

Major, Bvt. Major-General E. A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, commanded from May, 1870, until relieved by Colonel W. H. Emory, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, in July, 1870.

Major Eugene A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, commanded on this occasion from September, 1870, until October, 1870, when Colonel William H. Emory, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, reassumed command.

Colonel William H. Emory, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, commanded the fort from October, 1870, until October, 1871, when Major Eugene A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, reassumed command.

Major Eugene A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, during this tour of command served from October, 1871, until November, 1871, when Captain W. H. Jordan, Ninth U. S. Cavalry, assumed command.

Captain James Curtis, Third U. S. Cavalry, was commanding officer of Fort McPherson from January, 1872 until March, 1872, when Colonel, Bvt. Major-General Joseph J. Reynolds, Third U. S. Cavalry, assumed command of the garrison.

Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds, Third U. S. Cavalry, was Commanding Officer of the post from March, 1872, until October, 1872, when Captain James Curtis, Third U. S. Cavalry, reassumed command.

Captain James Curtis on his second tour of duty as Commanding Officer of Fort McPherson served from October, 1872, until November, 1872, when Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds, Third U. S. Cavalry, again assumed command.

Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds, Third U. S. Cavalry, commanded Fort McPherson from November, 1872, until May, 1873, when Major John B. DuBois, Third U. S. Cavalry, assumed command.

Major John B. DuBois, Third U. S. Cavalry, commanded Fort McPherson from May, 1873, until relieved by Captain Charles Meinhold.

After assuming command of the post in November, 1874, Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, served until December, 1874, when the command was taken by Captain Charles Meinhold, Third U. S. Cavalry.

Captain Charles Meinhold, Third U. S. Cavalry, commanded the post at Fort McPherson from December, 1874, until January, 1875, when Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, again assumed command.

On this tour of duty as Commanding Officer of the post, Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, served from January, 1875, until relieved in June, 1875, by Captain Charles Meinhold, Third U. S. Cavalry. Commanding Officer of the post from June, 1875, until relieved again by Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, in July, 1875.

Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, commanded the post from July, 1875, until August, 1875, when Captain Charles Meinhold, Third U. S. Cavalry, again assumed command.

Captain Charles Meinhold, Third U. S. Cavalry, commanded at the post from August, 1875, until September, 1875, when Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, again assumed command.

Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, commanded the post at Fort McPherson from September, 1875, until October, 1875, when the command was again taken over by Captain Charles Meinhold, Third U. S. Cavalry.

Captain Charles Meinhold, Third U. S. Cavalry, commanded at the post from October, 1875, until November, 1875, when Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, took command.

On this tour of duty as post Commander Major N. A. M. Dudley, Third U. S. Cavalry, served from November, 1875, until August, 1876, when the command was taken over by Captain Charles Wheaton, Third U. S. Cavalry.

Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, was Commanding Officer of the post at Fort McPherson from November, 1876, until July, 1877, when he was relieved of command by First Lieutenant P. P. Bernard, Fifth U. S. Cavalry.

First Lieutenant P. P. Bernard, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, commanded the garrison at Fort McPherson from July, 1877, until August, 1877, when Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, assumed command again.

Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, commanded

the post from August, 1877, until August, 1878, when Captain William H. Jordan, Ninth U. S. Infantry, assumed command.

Captain William H. Jordan, Ninth U. S. Infantry, commanded Fort McPherson from August, 1878, until he was relieved in September, 1878, by Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry.

Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. Carr, Fifth U. S. Cavalry, on this tour of command was Commanding Officer of the post from September, 1878, until January, 1879, when Captain Frederick C. Mears, Ninth U. S. Infantry, assumed command.

Captain Frederick C. Mears, Ninth U. S. Infantry, commanded Fort McPherson from January, 1879, until March, 1880, when First Lieutenant C. M. Rockefeller, Ninth U. S. Infantry, assumed the command.

First Lieutenant C. M. Rockefeller, Ninth U. S. Infantry, commanded the post at Fort McPherson from March, 1880, until the post was abandoned in June, 1880.

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Vol. II, No. 2, p. 6-7, Colonel Cody Hunts with Earl of Dunraven.

Vol. VI, No. 4, p. 114, Taking Supplies to Wm. Campbell, Freighter.

Vol. X, No. 4, p. 345, Established as Cottonwood Post, and Grand Duke Alexis, also Earl of Dunraven Hunt.

Vol. XII, No. 3, p. 254, Established as Ft. McKean.

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